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Over 350 players in fray for 1st ever women's HIL auctions

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Gloves are off: India recalls Canada envoy over Nijjar probe row

India fires 6 Canadian envoys after 'suspect' tag

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

India on Monday announced withdrawing its high commissioner and other "targeted diplomats and officials" from Canada, and it also expelled six Canadian diplomats.

This was after strongly dismissing Ottawa's allegations linking an envoy to an investigation into the killing of Sikh extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, in a major escalation of tensions amid the already frosty ties between the two nations.

In a tit-for-tat move, Canada too has asked six Indian diplomats to leave the country after police collected evidence they were part of an Indian government "campaign of violence".

India's decision came shortly after the Canadian Charge d'Affaires Stewart Wheelers was summoned to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and was told that the baseless "targeting" of Indian High Commissioner Sanjay Verma and other diplomats and officials was "completely unacceptable".

New Delhi described the charges against Verma as "concocted" and "preposterous imputations" and ascribes the allegations to the "political agenda of the Trudeau government that is centred around vote bank politics".

The MEA said India received a "diplomatic communication from Canada on Sunday suggesting that the Indian High Commissioner and other diplomats are 'persons of interest'".

The Canadian Charge d'Affaires (CDA) was summoned by MEA and it was underlined to him that in an atmosphere of extremism and violence, the Trudeau government's actions "endangered" the safety of Indian diplomats and other officials. The relations between India and Canada came under severe strain following Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar.

He was gunned down in Surrey, British Columbia, in June last year. New Delhi had rejected Trudeau's charges as "absurd".

Earlier in the day, MEA said India reserves the right to take further steps in response to these "latest efforts of the Canadian government to concoct allegations against Indian diplomats." "Since Trudeau made certain allegations in September 2023, the Canadian government has not shared a shred of evidence with India, despite many requests from our side," it said.

MEA also made a mention of what it called Trudeau's "naked interference" in Indian internal politics in December 2020, apparently recalling the Canadian leader's comments during the farmers' agitation. —*PTI*

Delhi rejected the allegations as 'preposterous' and said they were part of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's political agenda **PHOTO: PTI**

EAM set to arrive in Pak today for SCO meet

LAHORE, 14 OCT

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is set to land in Pakistan on Tuesday to attend a conclave of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), in the first high-level visit from India in years amid continuing strain in ties between the two neighbours. Shortly after he arrives in Islamabad, Jaishankar is likely to attend a banquet reception hosted by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to welcome the delegates from the SCO member nations, people familiar with the matter said. It will be for the first time in nearly nine years that India's foreign minister will travel to Pakistan. —*PTI*

3 int'l flights from Mumbai get hoax bomb threats

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, 14 OCT

Three international flights originating from Mumbai received bomb threats on Monday. While a New York-bound Air India flight was diverted to New Delhi and rescheduled to Tuesday, the other two, both operated by IndiGo, were delayed by several hours. Nothing suspicious was found on any of the planes, police officials said. All 258 people onboard the aircraft were disembarked and made to go through security procedures, it said. There were 239 passengers and 19 crew members onboard the plane. The bomb threat was received through a post on X. Two IndiGo flights, one headed to Muscat and the other to Jeddah, also received bomb threats before they took off and the planes were moved to isolation bays for security checks. —*PTI*

Delhi bans firecrackers to combat pollution

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Anticipating a rise in pollution levels as winter approaches, Delhi government on Monday imposed an immediate ban on the production, storage, sale and use of firecrackers across the city, effective till 1 January. The ban applies to all forms of firecrackers, including those sold online, and aims to address the rising pollution levels that worsen in the winter due to stubble burning, lower wind speeds and other seasonal factors, it said. Delhi Police is tasked with enforcing the ban. —*PTI*

UNREST SPREADS

Clashes erupt in Belagavi during Durga immersion

BELAGAVI, 14 OCT

A clash broke out between two groups in Solapur village of Belgavi on Sunday night after the alleged desecration of the Durga Devi idol.

A commotion started between two groups when the Durga idol was brought for immersion. Due to the violent clash, three people were injured and two bikes and a car were damaged.

Meanwhile, the situation is under control after police used a lathi charge to separate the throng. To prevent further unrest, tight security has been deployed.

The police have been conducting route marches since the incident happened in the area to maintain law and order.

According to SP Belagavi, Bheema Shankar Guled, said "A fight started between Amita Naika and Firoz. When two groups of people gathered, the police did a lathicharge. The police dispersed the people by baton charge. To control the situation two KSRPs, and more policemen battalions have been deployed. The incident took place in Sankeshwar police station. The situation is under control as of now." —*PTI*

BAHRAICH BURNS AFTER YOUTH KILLED DURING IMMERSION

BAHRAICH, 14 OCT

Scores of people, some armed with sticks, walked along the cortege of a youth killed during a Durga procession here amid cries for justice from his family and others on Monday, a day of escalating tensions that saw shops being burnt and angry crowds walking the streets.

The last rites of 22-year-old Ram Gopal Mishra, who died during the communal violence that broke out in Maharajganj area near Rehua Mansoor village in Mahsi tehsil on Sunday, were performed amid heavy police presence.

About half a dozen people were injured in stone pelting and firing that followed after Mishra died. Police officials said the internet services have been suspended. The sources confirmed three arrests and added that a case has been registered against six identified and 24 unidentified people for murder. About 30 people have been detained. Police said raids were conducted to arrest Salman, who is among the named accused in the case. There were protests at several places and slogans raised against police and administrative officials.

While there were reports of the violence being triggered by a disagreement over music being blasted out from loudspeakers while the procession was passing through the area, a video posted on X by @askrajeshsahu from Dainik Bhasker shows Mishra replacing a green flag with a saffron one amid chants of 'Jai Bajrang Bali' from the crowd.

Later, Mishra was walking in the procession when he suffered a bullet wound. He was rushed to a hospital where he died during treatment, one of his family members said. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 4

A hospital is set on fire by miscreants in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Court denies Darshan bail in Renukaswamy case

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

A sessions court here on Monday denied the bail petitions of Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa and his friend Pavithra Gowda in connection with the murder of 33-year-old Renukaswamy, a fan of the actor.

Renukaswamy was abducted from his hometown Chitradurga and tortured to death allegedly by Darshan and his gang members.

The victim had allegedly sent obscene messages to the prime accused of the case and the actor's friend Pavithra Gowda, which enraged the actor. This alleged provocation is said to have led to Renukaswamy's murder. His body was discovered near a stormwater drain close to an apartment complex in Sumanahalli, Bengaluru, on 9 June.

In September, the Bengaluru police filed a comprehensive 3,991-page charge sheet implicating 17 people, including Darshan and Gowda, in the case. —*PTI*

Darshan Thoogudeepa and Pavithra Gowda **PHOTO: X**

- In September, the Bengaluru police filed a comprehensive 3,991-page charge sheet implicating 17 people, including Darshan and Gowda, in the case.

4 OF FAMILY FOUND DEAD IN BENGALURU

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

A four-member family was found dead at Singanayakanahalli here, a senior police officer said on Monday.

The deceased are Avinash, 33; wife Mamatha, 30; and their two daughters aged five and three, police sources said.

Avinash, a cab driver with ride-hailing apps, was found hanging and the others were found dead in their house.

The family from Kalaburagi was staying here for the last five-six years. Bengaluru Rural district Superintendent of Police CK Baba told reporters: "...morning when Avinash's brother came and when no one opened the door, he broke open the door and found his brother, his wife and their two daughters dead. Avinash had hanged himself. We have to investigate how the others died." —*PTI*

BENGALURU'S INFAMOUS JAM

Traffic congestion was reported on Vatal Nagaraj Road and the Okalipuram signal-free corridor as people return to City after the end of Dasara holidays in Bengaluru on Monday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Congress' Nagendra gets bail in Valmiki scam

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

Congress MLA, B Nagendra was granted bail by the Special Court for People's Representatives here on Monday.

He had resigned as the Scheduled Tribes Welfare Minister in June following allegations of his involvement in the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation scam.

Directorate of Enforcement (ED) said last week Nagendra has been identified as the primary accused and mastermind behind the scam, allegedly orchestrating it with the help of 24 others.

The ED had earlier arrested Nagendra and five other key accused during the investigation. The ED had said its investigation revealed that under the influence of Nagendra, the account of the corporation was moved to the MG Road Branch without any proper authorisation, where Rs 187 crore, including Rs. 43.33 crore from the State Treasury under the 'Ganga Kalyana Scheme', were deposited without following proper procedures and in violation of government guidelines. —*PTI*

B Nagendra **PHOTO: FB**

3 BAG AWARD

Nobel in economics goes to study on prosperity gap between nations

STOCKHOLM, 14 OCT

The Nobel memorial prize in economics was awarded Monday to Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A Robinson for research that explains why societies with poor rule of law and exploitative institutions do not generate sustainable growth.

Acemoglu and Johnson work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Robinson conducts his research at the University of Chicago.

"The laureates' model for explaining the circumstances under which political institutions are formed and changed has three components. The first is a conflict over how resources are allocated and who holds decision-making power in a society (the elite or the masses)," the Nobel Prize said in a post on X.

"The second is that the masses sometimes have the opportunity to exercise power by mobilising and threatening the ruling elite; power in a society is thus more than the power to make decisions.

The third is the commitment problem, which means that the only alternative is for the elite to hand over decision-making power to the populace," the X post read. —*PTI*

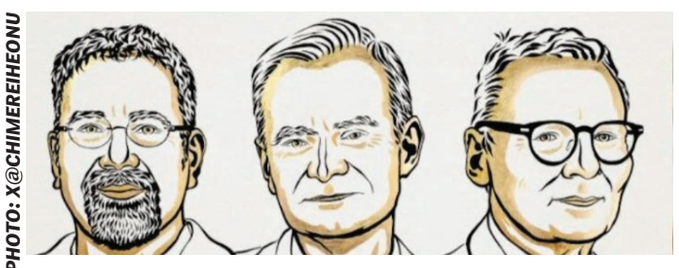


PHOTO: X@CHIMEREIHEONU

Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, James A. Robinson

BABA SIDDIQUE'S SON ON BISHNOI'S HIT LIST: SHOOTER

MUMBAI, 14 OCT

After veteran politician Baba Siddiqui was shot dead in Mumbai, sources claim his MLA-son Zeeshan Siddique is also on the Bishnoi gang's hit-list. The shooters told the cops they were given a contract to kill both Baba Siddique and Zeeshan, said police sources.

Zeeshan Siddique, a Congress MLA from Vandre East, was expelled by the party months ago after instances of cross-voting during the legislative council elections.

Only one constable was accompanying NCP leader when he was shot dead in Mumbai's Bandra area on 12 October by three persons who took cover of Dussehra fireworks to open fire, a police official said on Monday. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 5

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Centre grants 'Z' category security cover to K'taka Guv

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The Central government has granted 'Z' category Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) security cover to Karnataka Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot. Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued a written order in this regard and the messages were communicated to the CRPF last week following a recent security analysis threat report prepared by the Intelligence Bureau, said sources. The CRPF personnel have physically taken over the security of the Karnataka Governor while some other procedures linked to his security will be completed by this week, sources, privy to the development, told ANI. As per sources, Gehlot will be provided the Z category security cover in Karnataka only. The 76-year-old leader assumed office as the Governor of Karnataka in July 2021. *—ANI*

Three die in Raichur road accident

RAICHUR, 14 OCT

Three people travelling in a car were killed when their vehicle collided head on with a truck on Monday in Kallur village in the district, police said. The deceased were residents of Konapur in Manvi town of Raichur district. After the accident, the truck driver fled the spot, leaving behind his vehicle, police said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Rape: Muniratna, 3 others get anticipatory bail

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

Special MP/MLA Court in Bengaluru on Monday granted anticipatory bail to three individuals in a rape case in which BJP MLA Munirathna is also an accused. Lohit, Kiran, and Manjunath were granted bail by Judge Santhosh Gajanan Bhat. The case was filed against Munirathna and others following a complaint by a 40-year-old woman, a social worker from Rajarajeshwari Nagar who had been active in the BJP. The FIR was registered at the Kaggalipura police station. *—PTI*

Special child gets his vision back

MYSURU, 14 OCT

A special child from HD Kote taluk of the district has regained his vision, thanks to an eye surgeon couple from the City. The child suffered from global developmental delay and mild cerebral palsy. Despite undergoing a year of physiotherapy, the child had difficulty in walking. Additionally, the child had mild mental illness and limited speech abilities. Dr Ravishankar and Dr Uma Ravishankar from Usha Kiran Eye Hospital carried out successful bilateral cataract surgery, focusing on the right eye. A foldable intraocular lens (IOL) was implanted, along with primary posterior capsulotomy (surgery to treat cloudy lens capsule) and anterior vitrectomy (surgery removing gel-like substance vitreous) by taking the help of anaesthesia experts. Before the surgery, the child underwent an evaluation by a paediatrician, neurologist, cardiologist and anaesthesiologists due to suspected systemic abnormalities, potentially caused by an intrauterine viral infection. *—Salar News*

Rahul benefitted from corruption in K'taka: BJP

BJP says CM returned MUDA plot to avoid humiliation

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

BJP national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari on Monday alleged that Rahul Gandhi has benefitted from corruption in Karnataka.

His statement came after Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's family decided to return a five-acre land allotted to a trust run by his son, Rahul Kharge.

"Karnataka Congress government is only focused on corruption, on taking land from the poor and filling the coffers of their family members...Both Mallikarjun Kharge and Siddaramaiah consider Rahul Gandhi as their mentor. So, was Rahul Gandhi a corruption mentor to both of them? It is proven that the Karnataka Congress Government is the most corrupt government to date and Rahul Gandhi was a beneficiary of the corruption happening in Karnataka," he said.

Bhandari also said that Mallikarjun Kharge has admitted that he abused his official position to provide alleged benefits to his family members after his family

Pradeep Bhandari *PHOTO: ANI*

decided to return a five-acre land allotted to a trust run by his son.

"Mallikarjun has admitted that he abused his official position to provide alleged benefits to his family members. It is proven that the modus operandi that Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has used in the MUDA scam to provide benefits to his family members is similar to the one used by Mallikarjun Kharge in the KIADB land issue," Bhandari said.

Meanwhile, BJP MP Praveen Khandelwal termed Mallikarjun Kharge's family's decision to return five-acre land allotted to a trust run by his son Rahul Kharge as an indication of a possible fraud and demanded the matter be investigated.

Recently, after the ED booked the Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah for money laundering in a case linked to the alleged MUDA land allotment scam, his wife wrote to the MUDA Commissioner, offering to surrender the 14 plots that were allotted to her by the authority.

BJP MP Jagadish Shettar on Monday questioned the timing of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's family returning five acres of land allotted to a trust run by his son Rahul Kharge and sought an explanation for the sudden move. He also questioned why the Kharge family now wants to return the land to the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB). Speaking to ANI Shettar said, "When allegations are made against the Siddhartha trust of Mallikarjun Kharge, he wants to return the land to the KIADB. Now why do they want to return it, they have to answer it. Why the public leaders like Mallikarjun Kharge and Priyank Kharge want to get government land?" *—ANI*

Activist Krishna meets SP, hands over papers

MYSURU, 14 OCT

Activist Snehamayi Krishna on Monday visited the Lokayukta SP office here and handed over 25 pages of documents related to the MUDA case. Speaking to reporters, he said the documents are proof of Siddaramaiah's involvement in the MUDA scam. He also demanded the Chief Minister to submit the resignation. He claimed that there is a need for installation of CCTV cameras at Lokayukta office. *—Salar News*

SPACE EXPLORATION

ISRO Chairman gets World Space Award for Chandrayaan-3

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

ISRO said on Monday its Chairman S Somanath has received the International Astronautical Federation's (IAF) prestigious World Space Award for Chandrayaan-3's remarkable achievement.

"This recognition celebrates India's contributions to space exploration. Celebrations underway in Milan (Italy) as we continue to strive for new frontiers," the national agency headquartered here said in an online post.

According to the IAF, Chandrayaan-3 mission by ISRO exemplifies the synergy of scientific curiosity and cost-effective engineering, symbolising India's commitment to excellence and the vast potential that space exploration offers humanity. "Rapidly unveiling previously undiscovered facets of the Moon's composition and geology, the mission stands as a global testament to innovation.

Achieving a historic milestone, Chandrayaan-3 becomes the first to touch down near the lunar South Pole, showcasing both aspiration and technological prowess on an international scale," the IAF said in a statement.

ISRO Chairman S Somanath *PHOTO: X*

Chandrayaan-3 was launched 6 July last year from Sriharikota spaceport and it successfully made the soft landing near the South Pole on 23 August. In a statement, the IAF added, "Achieving a historic milestone, Chandrayaan-3 becomes the first to touch down near the lunar South Pole, showcasing both aspiration and technological prowess on an international scale." *—PTI*

'RELEASE PSI EXAM RESULTS'

Members of All Karnataka State Students' Association protest against the State government demanding immediate releasing of PSI re-exam results, at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

BJP protests over Hubballi riots case withdrawal

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

BJP leaders, including State President BY Vijayendra and Leader of Opposition R Ashoka, staged a protest here on Monday against Congress government in Karnataka for withdrawing criminal cases against AIMIM leaders who were accused in Hubballi riots of 2022.

Deputy Leader of Opposition Arvind Bellad said, "We strongly oppose the disgraceful withdrawal of the Hubballi riot case and the shameless protection of MLA Vinay Kulkarni, who faces serious rape allegations.

This government's actions reflect a dangerous pattern of shielding its lawmakers, no matter the severity of their crimes. Siddaramaiah must resign immediately and face an impartial inquiry into the MUDA scam. Kulkarni must be arrested without delay.

BJP State President BY Vijayendra, Leader of Opposition R Ashoka, protest in Bengaluru on Monday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

Anything less will confirm the Congress's commitment to protecting wrongdoers."

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi also condemned the Congress government in Karnataka for withdrawing cases against individuals he referred to as "Islamic fundamentalist elements". According to Joshi, these individuals were involved in violent incidents, including an attack on a police station. Joshi said, "The Congress government in Karnataka has withdrawn serious cases of Islamic fundamentalist elements. I want to bring it to the knowledge of the country through you that this was an attack." *—ANI*

BACL breaks ground for 2M sqft Business Park

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

Bengaluru Airport City Limited (BACL), a subsidiary of Bengaluru International Airport Limited (BIAL), broke ground for its ambitious two million square feet Business Park, aimed at promoting the city as a global hub for Global Capability Centres (GCCs).

This comes as part of the Karnataka Government's new GCC policy (2024-2029), which aims to create 3.5 lakh jobs and contribute USD 50 billion to the economy, a BIAL statement said on Monday.

The Business Park will be built over 17.7 acres. Executive Director & CEO of BACL, Rao Munukutla, said:

"The city has cemented its status as India's premier hub for Global Capability Centres (GCCs), with 36 per cent of India's GCC workforce driving growth across IT, biotechnology, automotive, and aerospace."

Located within the larger Kempegowda International Airport's (BLR Airport) campus, Bengaluru Airport City is being developed as a mixed-use destination, featuring business parks, an education & health district, R&D hubs, and multiple entertainment and hospitality options, it said.

The upcoming Airport West metro station, located within walking distance from the Business Park, will enhance connectivity to Bengaluru's city centre, providing faster and eco-friendly travel for employees and visitors, it was noted. As a future entertainment and hospitality hub, plans include India's first 'Concert Arena' within an airport ecosystem and a Convention & Exhibition Centre, it added. *—PTI*

S India not getting their share: Kharge on tax devolution

KALABURAGI, 14 OCT

Reiterating Congress leaders' allegation that the Centre has done injustice by allocating less funds to Karnataka in tax devolution, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has said they will raise the issue in Parliament as many states in south India are not getting their share. "From our government side, Chief Minister said on it and our Government will fight for it," Kharge said.

Government recently released tax devolution to the state governments in which Karnataka got Rs 6,498 crore, which the Karnataka Congress leaders have argued it is low compared to other states. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday alleged that Karnataka pays much higher tax but gets less devolution. Congress former MP DK Suresh on 11 October said that South India is being discriminated. *—ANI*

Eshwarappa attacks CM for withdrawing Hubballi riot case

MYSURU, 14 OCT

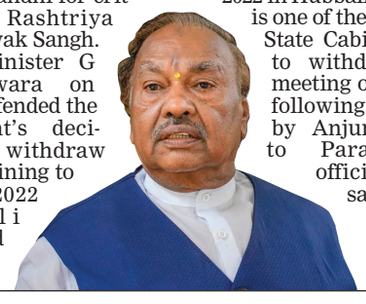
Former minister KS Eshwarappa on Monday criticised Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for withdrawing cases filed against miscreants involved in 2022 Hubballi riots case.

The BJP leader demanded the Chief Minister to stop appeasing the minority community for vote bank and other political advantages. On one side, the Chief Minister has been running to temples offering puja and on the other side, he has withdrawn cases filed against terrorists, anti-nationals and other traitors involved in destructing temples, and attacking police personnel, he added.

Eshwarappa also demanded Siddaramaiah to tender his resignation owing moral responsibility over MUDA irregularities. "I too submitted the resignation when I was charged with abetment of suicide of Santosh Patil, a contractor. Later," he said. He also lashed out at AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge and Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi for criticising Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Monday defended the government's decision to withdraw cases pertaining to the 2022 Hubballi riots and claimed that even Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had dropped ones against him.

He was reacting to the BJP staging a protest at Freedom Park here against the government's 10 October move to withdraw criminal cases registered against a mob which had attacked policemen with stones on 16 April, 2022 in Hubballi town. This is one of the 43 cases the State Cabinet decided to withdraw at its meeting on Thursday following a petition by Anjuman-e-Islam to Parameshwara, official sources said. *—Salar News/ PTI*



UNTIL NEXT YEAR

A traditional pooja was performed on all 14 jumbos near Kodi Someshwara temple on Monday *PHOTO: SALAR*

Dasara elephants, mahouts leave Mysuru

MYSURU, 14 OCT

14 Dasara elephants on Monday bid farewell to Mysuru, two days after the Dasara procession concluded on a grand note.

The jumbos including the golden Howdah carried Abhimanyu which was the major attraction of the festival giving a warm and emotional send-off from the Palace premises. A traditional puja was performed on all 14 jumbos near Kodi Someshwara temple before boarding the elephants onto the trucks. The forest department offered sugarcane, jaggery, coconut and banana to the elephant after the puja. A large number of visitors, and tourists turned up while boarding the elephants to trucks. Among the 14 elephants, Ekalavya refused to climb the truck. After a few minutes, the mahouts and kavadis calmed Ekalavya and successfully loaded him onto the truck.

The forest department informed that the present batch of elephants, mainly the new entrants and ones with four to five years of experience, like Dhananjaya and Prashantha, will lead the celebrations for years to come.

Speaking to reporters, DCF wildlife IB Prabhugowda said that all the jumbos performed their tasks well. Howdah, carrying Abhimanyu, who has participated in the Dasara procession for several years, remained calm and performed well from day one.

Mahuts and Kavadis were also rewarded with Rs 10,000 cash each for their service and participation by the district administration. Deputy Commissioner G Lakshmikanth Reddy, and CCF Malathi Priya were present.

All the jumbos were brought in two batches from different jungle camps to take part in the procession for this year 55 days ago. During their stay, the jumbos were trained by various exercises to acclimatise them.

Over 50 mahouts, kavadis, and their family members were also camped in the same place. Out of 14 jumbos, only 11 were involved during the festival.

Though the 14 jumbos were arrived, only 11 were involved in dasara festivities even after undergoing all training to acclimatize in citys environment. The forest department has given rest to other jumbos which were planned to use during exigencies. Deputy Commissioner G Lakshmikanth Reddy, CCF Malathi Priya were present. *—Salar News*

- Speaking to reporters, DCF wildlife IB Prabhugowda said that all the jumbos performed their tasks well. Howdah, carrying Abhimanyu, who has participated in the Dasara procession for several years, remained calm and performed well from day one

Uddhav Thackeray hospitalised

MUMBAI, 14 OCT

Former Maharashtra Chief Minister and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray was on Monday admitted to a Mumbai hospital for a health check-up, his son and party leader Aaditya Thackeray said. Aaditya said his father's visit to the hospital was a pre-planned detailed check-up and he is well. "This morning, Uddhav Thackeray ji did a pre-planned detailed check up at the Sir H N Reliance Hospital. With your best wishes, All is well, and he is fully ready to get to work and serve the people," Aaditya posted on X. There was no mention of Uddhav Thackeray undergoing an angioplasty at the hospital as reported in a section of media. *—PTI*

Army chief Gen Dwivedi in Japan to boost ties

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi is on a four-day visit to Japan with an aim to bolster defence cooperation between the two countries. During his visit from 14-17 October, the Army chief will also visit Hiroshima, wherein he will lay a wreath at the Hiroshima Peace Park and pay floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at his statue at the Peace Park. The visit marks a "significant step in bolstering defence cooperation between India and Japan," the defence ministry said in a statement here. He will engage in dialogue with the senior military leadership of Japan at the defence ministry in Ichigaya on Tuesday. During his visit, the Army chief will hold meetings with Gen Yoshida Yoshihide, Chief of Staff, Joint Self Defence Force; Gen Morishita Yasunori, Chief of Staff, Japan Ground Self-Defence Force (JGSDF); Ishikawa Takeshi, Commissioner of Acquisition, Technology and Logistic Agency (ATLA), it said. The discussions will be aimed at fostering stronger military cooperation between India and Japan. *—PTI*

SC extends stay on court proceedings against Tharoor

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Supreme Court on Monday extended by four weeks the stay on the trial court proceedings against Congress MP Shashi Tharoor in a defamation case filed for his alleged "scorpion on Shivling" remark targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A bench comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy and SVN Bhatti has granted four weeks' time to Delhi police and the complainant to file their responses to Tharoor's plea. The counsel appearing for Delhi police argued the main issue in the case was whether complainant Rajiv Babbar, a BJP leader, was an aggrieved party. Congress MP had moved the top court against the High Court's 29 August order, which refused to quash the defamation proceedings against him. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Centre upgrades Chirag Paswan's security cover

NEW DELHI/PATNA, 14 OCT

The Union government has enhanced the security of Cabinet minister Chirag Paswan and provided him with a Z-category cover, official sources said on Monday. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has directed the CRPF VIP security wing to extend a Z-category cover to Paswan. The new security team will cover the minister's movement across the country, the sources said. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) guards a number of VIPs, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. *—PTI*

Lanka to reconsider approval to Adani's power project

Former Kenya PM has claimed Modi introduced him to Adani

COLOMBO, 14 OCT

Sri Lanka's new government led by Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Monday told Supreme Court that it would reconsider the approval granted by the previous government to India's Adani Group for a wind power project.

At the same time, a controversy erupted in Kenya over handing over infrastructure projects to Adani Group as former Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga said that it was it was Narendra Modi as Gujarat Chief Minister who introduced the business house to them.

In Sri Lanka, a five-member Supreme Court bench was told on behalf of the attorney general that the decision to review the project had been taken at a Cabinet meeting held on 7 October.

President Dissanayake in the run-up to the 21 September presidential election had pledged that his National People's Power (NPP) alliance would annul the project.

The NPP claimed that the project posed a threat to Sri Lanka's energy sector sovereignty and promised that it would be cancelled in the event of their victory.

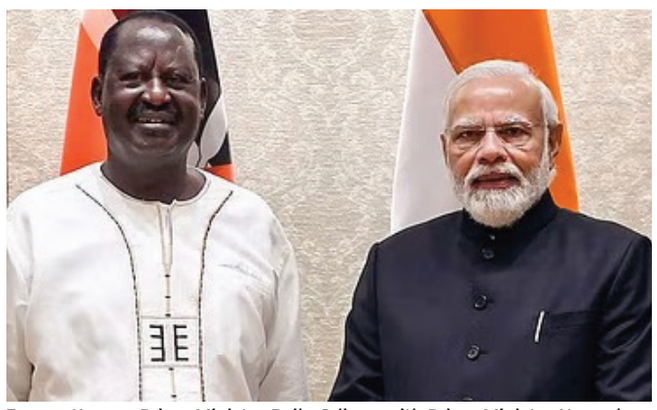
The Adani Group was set to invest over USD 440 million in the 20-year agreement for the development of 484 megawatts of wind power in the northeastern regions of Mannar and Pooneryn.

The project faced fundamental rights litigation in the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, attacking Modi over Kenya, Congress General Secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh said, "Odinga, who is under attack for favouritism to the Adani Group, now admits that he was introduced to the businessman over a decade ago by the-then CM of Gujarat, who also lobbied aggressively for the A Group,"

Odinga's statement defending the decision to bring in Adani Group came against the backdrop of the conglomerate's proposal to run Kenya's main airport running into protests and a court suspending it.

The Group last week had inked a contract to construct high-voltage power transmission lines last week. *—PTI*



Former Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga with Prime Minister Narendra Modi **PHOTO: PTI**

BABA SIDDIQUE'S MURDER

Gurmaol Baljit Singh, Dharmaraj Rajesh Kashyap and Shiv Kumar Gautam are the 3 accused in NCP's Baba Siddique's murder **PHOTO: X**

Bone test of accused proves he is not minor

MUMBAI, 14 OCT

Mumbai Police investigating the murder case of NCP leader and former Maharashtra minister Baba Siddiqui conducted an ossification test of accused Dharmaraj Kashyap in which it was proved that he is not minor, official said on Monday.

Baba Siddiqui was shot dead by three assailants on Saturday at suburban Bandra.

Mumbai police had arrested Gurmail Baljit Singh, 23, a resident of Haryana and Dharmaraj Rajesh Kashyap, 19, from Uttar Pradesh, whereas there one aide, who was at the spot during the firing, fled from the spot.

The accused were produced before the court by the crime branch team, where Dharmaraj Kashyap's lawyer claimed that he was a minor, an official said.

He was produced before the court and sent to police custody till 21 October, he said.

In late evening development, the crime branch of Mumbai Police has arrested 28-year-old Pravin Lonkar from Pune.

He is brother of Shubham Lonkar who is involved in the Nirmal Nagar firing case.

The brothers had hatched the conspiracy of killing Siddiqui and enlisted Kashyap and Shivkumar Gautam in the plot, the official said.

Punjab Police on Monday said Mohammad Yasin Akhtar, one of the suspects, is facing nine heinous criminal cases, including for murder and attempt to murder. *—PTI*

3rd suspect flaunts 'gangster' status on Insta

LUCKNOW, 14 OCT

Uttar Pradesh native Shiv Kumar Gautam, an absconding suspect in politician Baba Siddique's killing in Mumbai, had taken to posting online content in recent months, flaunting his "gangster" status.

"Yaar tera gangster hai jaani (your friend is a gangster)" Gautam had captioned his photo post on his Instagram account on 24 July.

The photo showed him on a motorcycle as a Haryanvi song played in the background.

Gautam hails from Gandara village in Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh, where locals and police said he had no criminal history. They added that he had gone to work at a scrap shop in Maharashtra.

Another post of his on 8 July was captioned "Sharif baap hai # (expletives) hum nahin". On May 26, he posted a brief video of a city skyline along with background music from "KGF", a film about a mercenary, with its dialogue "powerful people make places powerful". Interestingly, the number of Gautam's followers on Instagram has nearly doubled almost overnight -- from 299 on Sunday to 504 on Monday. *—PTI*

ED raids J'khand minister's aides ahead of polls in laundering case

RANCHI, 14 OCT

Enforcement Directorate Monday conducted searches against a senior IAS officer, persons linked to a cabinet minister and some others as part of a multi-crore money laundering probe into alleged irregularities in the water and sanitation department of poll-bound Jharkhand, official sources said.

The sources had earlier said that raids were linked to the Jal Jeevan Mission, a scheme of central government.

They said alleged illegal commission payments at the rate of 10 per cent was prevalent in the works awarded by the water and sanitation department and these kickbacks were shared among politicians in power, bureaucrats and department officials.

A total of 23 premises in state capital Ranchi and Chaibasa in West Singhbhum district were searched by the officials of the federal agency.

Premises linked to secretary rank IAS officer Manish Ranjan, Harendra Singh, a personal staffer of drinking water and sanitation minister Mithilesh Kumar Thakur, Thakur's brother Vinay Thakur, some government officials, contractors and businessmen were searched.

Reacting to the development, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren said "these are not unexpected" and will "continue as elections are approaching".

The money laundering case stems from a December, 2023 FIR lodged by the Jharkhand Police against one Santosh Kumar, a former cashier-cum-upper divisional clerk (UDC), posted at the office of Drinking Water and Sanitation Suvarnarekha Division, Ranchi along with unknown others. *—PTI*

CRPF personnel stand outside the residence of Manish Ranjan, close aide of Jharkhand Minister Mithilesh Thakur, as the ED conducts raids in the connection with alleged scam, in Ranchi,on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

NO TOLL FOR CARS IN 5 BOOTHS: M'RASHTRA GOVT

MUMBAI, 14 OCT

Maharashtra Government on Monday announced a complete toll waiver for light motor vehicles entering Mumbai at all five booths, with effect from 14 October midnight.

"There was a demand for the toll waiver due to the traffic jams at the toll booths," Chief Minister Eknath Shinde told reporters after the state cabinet approved the toll waiver decision at a meeting held in Mumbai Monday morning.

The move comes ahead of the upcoming state assembly polls, likely to be announced in a day, an official said.

The toll waiver is expected to bring relief to people travelling in and out of Mumbai ahead of Diwali. Commuters will be able to travel without paying toll at the five booths - Dahisar, LBS Road-Mulund, Eastern Express Highway-Mulund, Airoli Creek Bridge and Vashi. *—PTI*

'HOPING FOR COOPERATION'

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting in Delhi, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Praful: Consensus among allies on 225 to 230 seats

MUMBAI, 14 OCT

Senior NCP leader Praful Patel on Monday said the ruling Mahayuti alliance partners have reached a consensus on around 230 of the 288 seats in Maharashtra assembly.

"We have reached a consensus on 225 to 230-235 seats. Once the other seats are finalised, we will let you (media) know in the next two to four days," Patel told reporters.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday sought to clarify the reports of a rift between the Mahayuti alliance – which comprises his NCP, the BJP and Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena . The term ends on 26 November. *—PTI*

Idol at Hyderabad temple 'vandalised'; BJP's Latha detained

HYDERABAD, 14 OCT

Mild tension prevailed in Secunderabad here on Monday after an idol was found damaged at a temple and a large number of people gathered near the premises of the place of worship demanding stern action against the perpetrators.

The idol at the Muthyalamma temple was allegedly vandalised and one person was taken into custody in connection with the incident, a senior police official told PTI adding further investigation was on.

Union Minister and Telangana BJP president G Kishan Reddy visited the Mutyalamma temple and demanded a thorough investigation into the incident.

PHOTO: PTI

Based on preliminary investigation, a senior police official said one person entered the temple at around 4.30 am on Monday and partially damaged the idol following which he was taken into custody.

The person was allegedly thrashed by the locals and was hospitalised and is in an unconscious state, police said.

- Union Minister and Telangana BJP president G Kishan Reddy visited the Mutyalamma temple and demanded a thorough investigation into the incident.

A large number of people gathered near the temple and raised slogans demanding stern action against those responsible for the incident.

Meanwhile, BJP leader Madhavi Latha and some members of party and other right-wing organisations were taken into preventive custody by police when they tried to hold a protest. *—PTI*

'PANEL BREACHES RULES'

Opposition MPs boycott Waqf committee meeting

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Several opposition MPs on Monday boycotted a meeting of the parliamentary committee examining the Waqf (Amendment) Bill alleging that the panel is not functioning in accordance with rules, after Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge was accused by a deposer of being involved in Waqf land scams.

The lengthy meetings of the Joint Committee of Parliament have been marked by the exchange of heated words between its BJP and opposition member.

Opposition MPs walked out in protest against the submission of Anwar Manippady, a former chairman of the Karnataka State Minorities Commission and the Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation. He is also a former Karnataka BJP vice-president.

Manippady named several Congress leaders from Karnataka, including Kharge and Rehman Khan, and others for their alleged involvement in embezzling Waqf properties.

Opposition MPs, including Gaurav Gogoi and Imran Masood of the Congress, A Raja of the DMK, Arvind Sawant of the Shiv Sena (UBT), AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi, stormed out of the meeting and expressed strong sentiments against its proceedings. *—ANI*

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi and AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi arrive for a meeting on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

Probe against Suresh Gopi over ambulance misuse

THRISSUR, 14 OCT

Thrissur city police have launched a preliminary inquiry into allegations that Union Minister Suresh Gopi misused an ambulance during the Thrissur Pooram festival held in April this year, a police source said on Monday.

According to a police source, the preliminary inquiry aims to determine whether there is sufficient merit to register an FIR regarding the incident, which occurred before the Lok Sabha elections.

The complaint, filed by the local CPI leader, claims that Gopi arrived at the Pooram grounds in a Seva Bharati ambulance after the Thiruvambady faction temporarily paused the festival. It alleges that the ambulance, meant for medical emergencies, was used for non-medical purposes.

Additionally, the complaint states that Gopi was transported to a restricted area where other vehicles were prohibited. *—PTI*

Babaria says, will resign as in-charge after results

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Congress' Haryana in-charge Deepak Babaria on Monday said he has offered to resign from his post, taking moral responsibility for the assembly polls defeat.

Babaria said he offered his resignation to the high command soon after the result of the Haryana assembly polls came out last week but no decision has been communicated to him over the matter.

"Last week, after the results, I offered to resign. I offered to the high command that you can replace me. My health is not well and also it is my moral responsibility in the wake of the results. Keeping that in mind, I had told this to the high command that 'if you deem fit, you can replace me'," Babaria told PTI.

Congress top brass last Thursday held a review meeting on the party's shock defeat in Haryana Assembly polls and decided to form a fact-finding team that will speak to all its candidates to find out the reasons for the debacle.

Congress' Haryana in-charge Deepak Babariia **PHOTO: PTI**

RS member Panwar resigns, to start new innings

BJP leader and newly elected Haryana MLA Krishan Lal Panwar on Monday resigned from the Rajya Sabha. Panwar met Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and submitted his resignation, saying he is starting his new innings in Haryana after being elected as an MLA from Israna. *—PTI*

14-year-old tribal girl raped by 3 in Jharkhand's Godda

GODDA, 14 OCT

A 14-year-old tribal girl was allegedly raped by three men in Jharkhand's Godda district, police said on Monday. The three men intercepted the girl when she was returning home from a Durga puja fair at Lalmatia on 12 October and allegedly raped her, the police said. The girl's mother registered a case in this regard on Sunday after she narrated the ordeal on returning home. Superintendent of Police Animesh Naithany said the police swung into action soon after a case was registered and arrested all three accused. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Vice Admiral Kavita Sahai takes charge as DGMS

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Surgeon Vice Admiral Kavita Sahai assumed charge on Monday as the Director General Medical Services (Navy). An alumna of the prestigious Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC) in Pune, Sahai earlier was the first woman officer to be elected as the Colonel Commandant of the Army Medical Corps, a Navy spokesperson said in a statement. "Prior to assuming charge as the DGMS (Navy), she was the first woman commandant of AMC Centre and College...," it said. The Flag Officer was commissioned in the Army Medical Corps on December 30, 1986, according to the statement. It said Sahai has specialised in pathology and super-specialised in oncopathology from the AIIMS, Delhi. "The officer has been a professor and head of department, lab sciences at AHRR (Army Hospital Research and Referral) and BHDC (Base Hospital Delhi Cantonment). *—PTI*

Gujarat cops arrest 4 Taiwanese in digital arrest fraud

AHMEDABAD, 14 OCT

Seventeen persons, including four hailing from Taiwan, were arrested by Ahmedabad Cyber Crime Branch for allegedly operating a nationwide "digital arrest" racket, a Gujarat police official said on Monday. Digital arrest is a type of cyber crime in which the victim is made to believe that he/she is under investigation by authorities for money laundering, drug smuggling etc. The victim is asked to remain in confinement while being accessible to fraudsters via video call and other online tools, hence the term digital arrest. The victim is then forced to transfer large amounts of money into various bank accounts by the accused in order to be let off. The gang had "digitally arrested" a senior citizen for 10 days, kept watch on him via video calls and got him to deposit Rs 79.34 lakhs as "refundable" processing fees to sort out an "RBI issue", said Joint Commissioner (Crime) Sharad Singhal. *—PTI*

Teen drinks poison after mom asks her not to use phone

THANE, 14 OCT

A 15-year-old girl from Maharashtra's Thane district allegedly consumed poison after being scolded by her mother for spending too much time on the mobile phone and died during treatment, police said on Monday. The girl, resident of Ambernath area, consumed a rat poison on September 26. She was then rushed to a local hospital. As her condition became critical, she was shifted to a hospital in neighbouring Mumbai where she died on October 2, an official from Ambernath police station said. Based on the medical report, the police on Saturday registered a case of accidental death, he said. *—PTI*

Bulldoze the house of accused: Family of Bahraich victim

Kin claim the body was riddled with gunshot wounds

BAHRAICH, 14 OCT

The sister of the youth killed in communal violence that broke out during a Durga idol immersion procession in the Mahrajganj area in Bahraich's Mansoor village on Sunday urged the Uttar Pradesh government to use bulldozers to demolish the house of the accused.

Ram Gopal Mishra's Rajrani, Mishra's sister, told PTI Videos, "My brother's entire body had gunshot wounds."

Munni Devi, mother of the youth who died, told PTI Videos, "My son has died...We want justice."

Meanwhile, Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday said the administration's "inaction" amid the violence in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich is "unfortunate" and appealed to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to take the strictest action against the culprits.

One youth was killed as communal violence broke out during a Durga idol immersion procession in the Mahrajganj area in Bahraich's Mansoor village on Sunday following a disagreement over music being blasted from

"The last rites of Ram Gopal have been performed by his family members," BJP MLA from Mahsi Sureshwar Singh told PTI. "He had got married barely four months ago. His family wants strict action against those responsible for his death," the MLA said.

He also said that the SHO of Hardi police station Suresh Kumar Verma and a police outpost in-charge have been suspended.

Eyewitnesses said a massive crowd had gathered for Mishra's funeral procession when the body reached Rehua Mansoor village on Monday morning. The agitated crowd then decided to block the busy road in front of Mahsi tehsil and squatted on the road with the body. They refused to cremate the body until justice was done, and demanded "police encounter" for those responsible for the youth's death, demolition of their houses and adequate compensation for the kin of the deceased. Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya posted on X, "Any conspiracy to disturb peace and harmony will not be unsuccessful. Those who protect the rioters are once again becoming active, but we have to be cautious and vigilant."

The incident has sparked a political slugfest.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav appealed for peace and termed the Bahraich violence as "sad". *—PTI*

Motorcycles were was set on fire by some miscreants in a violence-affected area, in Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh, on Monday PHOTO: ANI

A bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra refused to entertain the plea PHOTO: ANI

Top court junks plea alleging side effects of Covid vaccines

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The Supreme Court on Monday turned down a petition alleging that administration of Covid-19 vaccines led to side-effects such as blood clotting.

A bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra refused to entertain the plea and observed the petition was just an attempt to create a sensation. The top court also observed what would happen if the vaccine had not been taken by the people.

"We don't want to rake this up, this is just to create a sensation," the top court said. The top court also sought to know what was the use of the plea. The top court also asked the petitioner's lawyer if he had taken the medicine. The lawyer replied yes.

Then the court sought to know whether he suffered any side effects and the answer by the lawyer was that he didn't suffer any side effects. The plea was filed by one Priya Mishra and other who has challenged the alleged side effects of Covid vaccines.

It also sought directions to the Centre to establish a Vaccine Damage Payment System for the Citizens who got severely disabled as a result of a vaccination Drive during Covid-19. *—ANI*

SC grants bail to tycoon Boinpally

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to Hyderabad-based businessman Abhishek Boinpally in a money laundering case related to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. *—PTI*

SC junks plea by Azam Khan's trust

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The Supreme Court dismissed a plea challenging the cancellation of a land lease belonging to Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar University run by a trust headed by SP leader Azam Khan in Uttar Pradesh. *—PTI*

SC rejects plea for Sindhi Doordarshan channel

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea by an NGO which sought directions to the Centre to start a 24-hour Sindhi language channel on Doordarshan. A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra rejected NGO Sindhi Sangat's petition challenging an order of the Delhi High Court which dismissed the plea. The top court said there may be other means to preserve the language. Senior advocate Indira Jaising, appearing for the NGO, said one of the ways to preserve the language is through public broadcasting. *—PTI*

RG KAR ISSUE

Docs' hunger strike enters 10th day, another medic falls sick

KOLKATA, 14 OCT

The 'fast-unto-death' by junior doctors in West Bengal to press for their demands in the wake of the RG Kar hospital incident entered the 10th day on Monday, even as the health condition of two more medics deteriorated, one of whom has been hospitalised, officials said.

Pulastha Acharya, a junior doctor from NRS Medical College and Hospital, was admitted to the health facility on Sunday night after he complained of severe stomach pain. "Pulastha is in the CCU and his parameters have deteriorated. We have formed a medical board to treat him," a senior doctor of the NRS Medical College and Hospital said. Tanya Panja, another junior medic from the Kolkata Medical College, showed signs of deteriorating health in the afternoon. "Her vitals are not stable and she is currently under observation at the protest site. We are yet to decide if she needs to be hospitalised," a protesting doctor said.

"Most of the junior medics who are on hunger strike are not keeping well. We are monitoring them," he told PTI. Three of the junior medics who were on hunger strike in Kolkata and Siliguri city in the northern part of the state were earlier hospitalised in view of their health condition. The total number of doctors on a 'fast-unto-death' is seven at present, including a junior medic from the North Bengal Medical College's ENT department, who joined the strike this afternoon. *—PTI*

Pulastha Acharya, a junior doctor from NRS Medical College and Hospital, was admitted to the health facility on Sunday night PHOTO: X

Film actor Bala PHOTO: PTI

Actor Bala arrested on charges of defamation

KOCHI, 14 OCT

Film actor Bala was arrested by the police early on Monday following a complaint filed by his ex-wife, a singer, and their daughter.

After recording his arrest, the police took him for a medical examination and presented him in court, which granted him bail. While granting bail, the court ruled that no videos of his child should be uploaded on social media platforms and directed him to cooperate with the investigating officer, according to his lawyer.

He was released on bail with two sureties of Rs 25,000 each. Police said Bala was arrested on charges including defamation via social media, insulting womanhood, and cruelty towards children. He was taken into custody from his home early on Monday. *—PTI*

Kolkata-bound Air India plane suffers tech issue

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

A Kolkata-bound Air India plane returned to the national capital on Monday morning due to a technical issue.

A source in the know said the aircraft apparently faced an issue with its nose wheel soon after take off and returned to the Delhi airport, where an emergency was also declared for its landing. The plane landed safely, the source added.

When contacted, an Air India spokesperson said the flight AI401 operating from Delhi to Kolkata returned to the national capital due to a technical issue. "The aircraft landed safely for precautionary checks," the spokesperson told PTI in a statement.

The airline is making alternative arrangements for the passengers to fly them to their destination at the earliest. Details about the number of passengers who were onboard the aircraft could not be immediately ascertained.

The flight was operated with an A321 plane, according to information available on flight tracking site Flightradar24.

"Full refunds on cancellation and complimentary rescheduling to another date are being offered to guests if so desired by them," the spokesperson said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

4 OF FAMILY FOUND DEAD IN KERALA

KOCHI, 14 OCT

A family of four, including two children, was found dead in their home in Ernakulam district on Monday, police said.

The incident occurred in Chottanikkara area. Locals discovered the bodies of the couple, both school teachers, and their children in their residence. Police were alerted by the ward member. The bodies of the 12-year-old son and nine-year-old daughter were found on the bed, while their parents were discovered hanging.

Preliminary investigations suggest suicide due to financial distress, police said. However, a thorough investigation is necessary to determine the exact circumstances and cause of the children's deaths, they said. The incident came to light when the couple failed to report to their schools this morning. *—PTI*

Actress rape: Kerala HC junks plea for probe into memory card case

KOCHI, 14 OCT

The Kerala High Court on Monday dismissed a petition seeking a fresh probe into the alleged illegal access of a memory card, which is crucial evidence in the sensational actress assault case of 2017.

The survivor in the assault case had approached the High Court to set aside the fact-finding inquiry report submitted by the Ernakulam Sessions and District Judge on January 8, 2024, and to order a fresh investigation into the matter.

The high court ruled that the plea was not maintainable.

PHOTO: PTI

However, the court stated that the complainant could seek appropriate legal proceedings in accordance with the law.

In her plea, the survivor had claimed that a mere reading of the inquiry report with regard to the illegal access of the devices indicates that the authority carrying out the probe "never conducted a fair, free and complete" investigation as directed by the High Court.

The survivor had contended that the report is liable to be quashed and urged that a fresh probe be carried out by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under supervision of the High Court to uphold the majesty of law, maintain the purity of the legal system and protect her right to privacy. *—PTI*

GOVT APPROVES DRAFT PLAN

Kerala will press for more relaxation in CRZ: Vijayan

T'PURAM, 14 OCT

The Kerala government on Monday said it would continue adopting strong measures to secure further relaxation in the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) from the Centre, in line with the state's interests.

The central government has approved the draft Coastal Management Plan prepared and submitted by the state to obtain relaxation in the regulation limit for the construction activities on the sea and backwater coasts, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told the state assembly.

An official announcement in this regard is expected soon, and with this, the state would get related benefits, he said. The Chief Minister was replying to a calling attention motion by P Nandakumar on the CRZ issue in the House.

In 2019, the union government had issued a notification to allow further relaxation in the Coastal Management Act, and the state appointed a three-member expert panel to study these concessions to make them completely beneficial to the state, he said. On the basis of the committee's report, detailed discussions were held with the union government, and a draft Coastal Management Plan was prepared.

Public opinion was also sought in 10 coastal districts to get full benefits of the draft plan.

Around 33,000 complaints and suggestions received were collected and forwarded to the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management in Chennai for making necessary changes in the draft plan, he added. *—PTI*

Pinarayi Vijayan PHOTO: PTI

CHENNAI PREPS FOR RAIN

Residents park their cars on a flyover amid heavy rain alert in Chennai. The India Meteorological Department on Monday warned of heavy to extremely heavy rainfall over Tamil Nadu during the next four days PHOTO: X

TN CM Stalin takes stock of monsoon situation

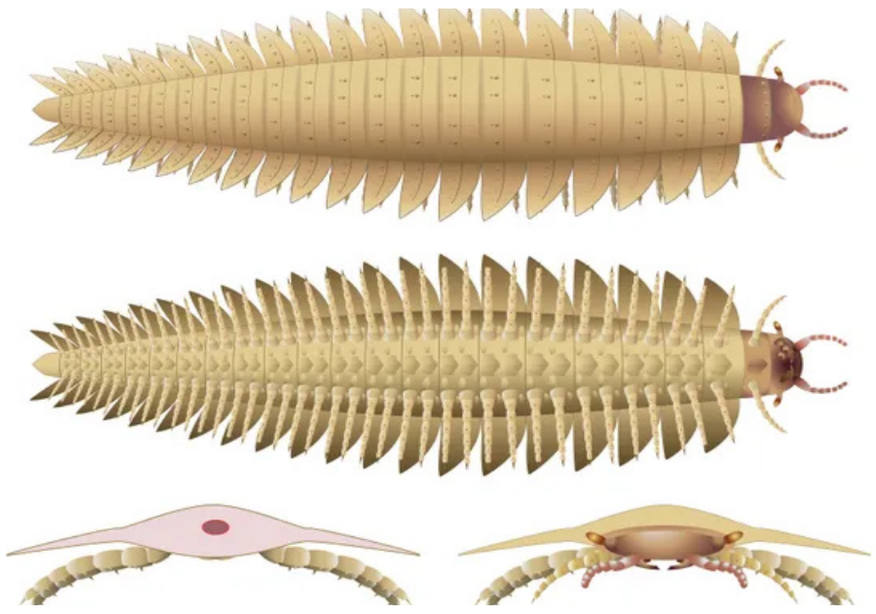
CHENNAI, 14 OCT

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Monday took stock of the situation arising due to the heavy rain predicted by the Regional Meteorological Centre, Chennai, in the next four days.

He has directed the authorities to declare a holiday for schools and colleges in Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kanchipuram, and Chengalpattu districts on 15 October, and also asked them to issue advisory to IT firms to allow their employees to work from home from 15 to 18 October. "It is likely to become a well marked low pressure area and move west-northwestwards towards north Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and adjoining south Andhra Pradesh coasts during the next two days," it said. *—PTI*

BIGGEST BUG IN THE WORLD

Paleontologists uncovered the face of Arthropleura, a colossal millipede-like creature that roamed ancient Earth. For more than a hundred years, scientists had been searching for the missing piece, whose fossils revealed a segmented body of terrifying proportions but lacked its head. Measuring over eight feet long — longer than a king-sized bed or the size of a small car — Arthropleura once dominated the lush swamps of Earth some 300 million years ago ***PHOTO: X***



Salman hater Bishnoi runs 700-strong gang from jail

Incarcerated gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, 31, alias Balkaran Barar was all of five when the infamous black-buck poaching case involving Bollywood star Salman Khan took place in 1998 during the filming of "Hum Saath-Saath Hain" in Rajasthan, irking the Bishnoi community which revers the animal.

Twenty-six years down the line, the notorious gangster's deep resentment against Salman even while in prison continues to make headlines, especially after the gunning down of former Maharashtra minister and NCP leader Baba Siddique,66, known to be close to the Bollywood actor, by three assailants in Mumbai last week.

The Mumbai Police suspects Siddique was killed at the behest of Bishnoi after a purported Facebook post surfaced claiming "Jo Salman Khan aur Dawood gang ki help karega apna hisab-kitab laga ke rakhna (whoever helps Salman Khan and the Dawood gang, keep your accounts in order)". The comments were posted by one Shubuu Lonkar, whom the police suspect to be Bishnoi gang aide Shubham Rameshwar Lonkar.

A senior Delhi Police officer told PTI that the intent of the Bishnoi gang has now gone beyond taking revenge against Salman. "The gang is now trying to penetrate Bollywood, an area once ruled by Dawood Ibrahim, and set up its own D-Company," the officer said.

Despite being lodged in prison, Bishnoi has allegedly managed to execute murders of many high-profile people, including Punjabi singer Siddhu Moosewala in 2022, Karni Sena chief Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi in 2023, besides orchestrating firing outside the residences of singers A P Dhillon and Gippy Garewal in Canada, the officer said.In September 2023, the gang claimed responsibility for the killing of Khalistani sympathiser Sukha Duneke.

The terror-crime-extortion syndicate was also responsible for the RPG attack on Punjab State Intelligence headquarters in Mohali in May 2023, allegedly on the directions of Harwinder Singh alias Rinda, a member of the Pakistan-based pro-Khalistan terror outfit Babbar Khalsa International (BKI). According to the police, the animosity between Bishnoi and Salman first became public in 2018 when Bishnoi said during a court appearance in Jodhpur, "We will kill Salman Khan. Everyone will know once we take action. I have not done anything as of now, they are accusing me of crimes for no reason." Since then, the popular actor has received multiple threats to his life, with the matter reaching a tipping point in April this year when gunshots were fired outside Salman's Bandra residence by two shooters reportedly belonging to the Bishnoi gang who were later arrested.

As per Delhi Police records, Bishnoi himself never killed anyone yet he has become one of the most dreaded gangsters, running the gang with "impunity" from a Gujarat prison with a modus operandi similar to that of fugitive underworld don Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar. According to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), Bishnoi now enjoys a 700-member strong gang spread across the country, including sharpshooters, with the help of other notorious gangsters such as Goldy Brar, Sachin Thapan, Anmol Bishnoi, Vikramjit Singh, Kala Jatheri, and Kala Rana.

"Most of the sharpshooters are young people who usually get influenced by his gang through social media," an official said. Son of a farmer, Bishnoi reportedly owns about 100-acre of land in Punjab, the records show.

He has a tattoo of Lord Hanuman imprinted on his right arm and is known for his driving and shooting skills.

Bishnoi forayed into the world of crime during his Panjab University days in 2010 when he opened fire at a rival contestant during the student body polls for which he spent three months in jail.

He also contested the varsity polls and became the students' union president while doing his graduation. Convicted in four criminal cases in Punjab, including on charges of extortion, murder, attempt to murder, and offences under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Bishnoi mostly operated in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi before setting his sights on Maharashtra. The NIA had earlier filed a chargesheet against Bishnoi in a case involving the seizure of around 39 kg heroin by the Gujarat Police in September 2022. NIA attached four properties owned by members of the Bishnoi syndicate. The properties, of which three were immovable and one movable, were attached in a coordinated swoop by NIA teams in Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh under the provisions of UAPA.

—PTI

Lawrence Bishnoi (centre) forayed into the world of crime during his Panjab University days in 2010 when he opened fire at a rival contestant during the student body polls ***PHOTO: X***

SALAR ساڈا

Poorest nations in crisis since 2006: World Bank

The world's 26 poorest countries are deeper in debt than at any time since 2006 and increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters and other shocks, the World Bank has said.

The poorest economies are worse off today than they were before the Covid-19 pandemic, even though the rest of the world has largely recovered, the Washington, DC-based lender said in a report released on Sunday.

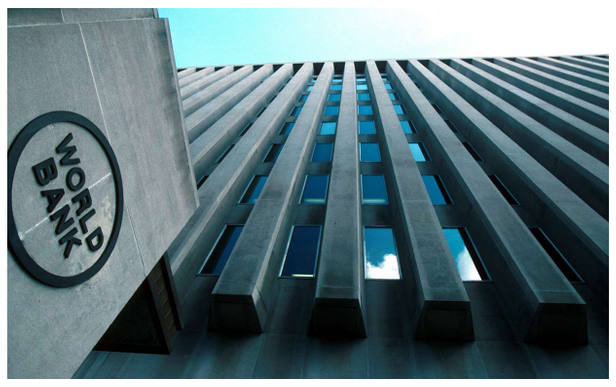
Per capita income fell an average of 14 percent between 2020 and 2024 due to Covid-19 and subsequent overlapping crises, according to the report.

To meet critical development goals, the economies will need additional annual investment equivalent to 8 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) through 2030 – double the average annual investment of the past decade, the World Bank said.

But despite the need for greater assistance, net official development assistance as a share of GDP has plummeted, falling to a 21-year low of 7 percent in 2022, the report said.

"At a time when much of the world simply backed away from the poorest countries, IDA [International Development Association] has been their main lifeline," said Indermit Gill, the World Bank Group's chief economist and senior vice president for development economics.

"Over the past five years, it has poured most of its financial resources into the 26 low-income economies, keeping them afloat through the historic setbacks they suffered. IDA has supported job creation and the education of children, worked to improve healthcare, and brought electricity and safe drinking water to large numbers of people. But if they are to rise out of a state of chronic emergency and meet key development goals, low-income economies will need to accelerate investment to a pace without precedent."



According to the report, low-income economies are far more at risk from natural disasters than other developing nation ***PHOTO: X***

- Between 2011 and 2023, natural disasters inflicted average annual losses of 2 percent of GDP – five times the average losses in lower-middle-income countries, the World Bank said

The report also found that low-income economies are far more at risk from natural disasters than other developing economies.

Between 2011 and 2023, natural disasters inflicted average annual losses of 2 percent of GDP – five times the average losses in lower-middle-income countries, the World Bank said.

Adapting to climate change is also five times more expensive for low-income economies, costing the equivalent of 3.5 percent of GDP per year, according to the report.

Ayhan Kose, the World Bank's deputy chief economist and director of the Prospects Group, said that lower-income countries could take steps to help themselves but would also need help from richer economies.

"They can broaden their tax base by simplifying taxpayer registration and tax collection and administration. They also have plenty of room to improve the efficiency of public spending," Kose said.

"But these economies also need stronger help from abroad – both in the form of greater international cooperation on trade and investment and in the form of much larger support for IDA, which can work with the private sector to mobilise additional resources and help facilitate structural reforms."

—Courtesy, Al-Jazeera

The poorest economies are worse off today than they were before the Covid-19 pandemic, even though the rest of the world has largely recovered ***PHOTO: WORLDBANK***

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Atmospheric rivers are shifting poleward, reshaping weather patterns

Atmospheric rivers – those long, narrow bands of water vapour in the sky that bring heavy rain and storms to the US West Coast and many other regions – are shifting toward higher latitudes, and that's changing weather patterns around the world.

The shift is worsening droughts in some regions, intensifying flooding in others, and putting water resources that many communities rely on at risk. When atmospheric rivers reach far northward into the Arctic, they can also melt sea ice, affecting the global climate.

In a new study published in Science Advances, University of California, Santa Barbara, climate scientist Qinghua Ding and I show that atmospheric rivers have shifted about 6 to 10 degrees toward the two poles over the past four decades.

Atmospheric rivers aren't just a US West Coast thing. They form in many parts of the world and provide over half of the mean annual runoff in these regions, including the US Southeast coasts and West Coast, Southeast Asia, New Zealand, northern Spain, Portugal, the United Kingdom and south-central Chile.

California relies on atmospheric rivers for up to 50 per cent of its yearly rainfall. A series of winter atmospheric rivers there can bring enough rain and snow to end a drought, as parts of the region saw in 2023.

While atmospheric rivers share a similar origin – moisture supply from the tropics – atmospheric instability of the jet stream allows them to curve poleward in different ways. No two atmospheric rivers are exactly alike. What particularly interest's climate scientists, is the collective behaviour of atmospheric rivers. Atmospheric rivers are commonly seen in the extratropics, a region between the latitudes of 30 and 50 degrees in both hemispheres that includes most of the continental US, southern Australia and Chile.

One main reason for this shift is changes in sea surface temperatures in the eastern tropical Pacific. Since 2000, waters in the eastern tropical Pacific have had a cooling tendency, which affects atmospheric circulation worldwide. This cooling, often associated with La Niña conditions, pushes atmospheric rivers toward the poles.

During La Niña conditions, when sea surface temperatures cool in the eastern tropical Pacific, the Walker circulation – giant loops of air that affect precipitation as they rise and fall over different parts of the tropics – strengthens over the western Pacific. This stronger circulation causes the tropical rainfall belt to expand. The expanded tropical rainfall, combined with changes in atmospheric eddy patterns, results in high-pressure anomalies and wind patterns that steer atmospheric rivers farther poleward.

Conversely, during El Niño conditions, with warmer sea surface temperatures, the mechanism operates in the opposite direction, shifting atmospheric rivers so they don't travel as far from the equator.

In the subtropics, where atmospheric rivers are becoming less common, the result could be longer droughts and less water. Many areas, such as California and southern Brazil, depend on atmospheric rivers for rainfall to fill reservoirs and support farming. Without this moisture, these areas could face more water shortages, putting stress on communities, farms and ecosystems. In higher latitudes, atmospheric rivers moving poleward could lead to more extreme rainfall, flooding and landslides in places such as the US Pacific Northwest, Europe, and even in polar regions.

In the Arctic, more atmospheric rivers could speed up sea ice melting, adding to global warming and affecting animals that rely on the ice. An earlier study I was involved in found that the trend in summertime atmospheric river activity may contribute 36 per cent of the increasing trend in summer moisture over the entire Arctic since 1979.

So far, the shifts reflect changes due to natural processes, but human-induced global warming also plays a role. Global warming is expected to increase the overall frequency and intensity of atmospheric rivers because a warmer atmosphere can hold more moisture. As the world gets warmer, atmospheric rivers – and the critical rains they bring – will keep changing course. We need to understand and adapt to these changes so communities can keep thriving in a changing climate.

—Courtesy, The Conversation

One main reason for this shift is changes in sea surface temperatures in the eastern tropical Pacific. But, human-induced global warming also plays a major role ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

PHOTO: X

Kanye accused of drugging, raping ex-assistant

LOS ANGELES, 14 OCT

Kanye West, aka Ye's former assistant, Lauren Pisciotta accused him of drugging and sexually assaulting her, Hollywood Reporter. Pisciotta filed a lawsuit against the rapper, claiming he drugged and sexually assaulted her during a studio session co-hosted by Sean 'Diddy' Combs, according to court documents filed in California. Pisciotta was invited to a studio session with West and Combs. Shortly after she arrived, drinks were served. After drinking, Pisciotta claims she felt disoriented. She alleges that when she woke up the next day, she remembered very little of what happened the night before. For years, Pisciotta believed she had just been drugged. But, according to the lawsuit, West later brought up the night, told her that they "did kind of hook up" . *—PTI*

3 dead in Lanka after rains, schools closed in capital

COLOMBO, 14 OCT

Three people have lost their lives and over 1,25,000 marooned after Sri Lanka witnessed extreme weather conditions in 12 districts prompting authorities to close all schools in the capital region on Monday after heavy-rain triggered rains. President Anura Dissanayake has directed allocation of an additional Rs 50 million to provide relief to the affected people even as Sri Lankan Navy and army troops have been deployed for flood relief and rescue work, including to provide food and other essentials to the affected people. The island nation has been pummeled with heavy rainfall since 8 October, however, some districts received rainfall over 100 mm over last two days along with high winds leading to flash floods and inundation in several areas. *—PTI*

40K Indians apply for 1,000 spots under Aus visa

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

About 40,000 applications have been submitted in just two weeks for 1,000 spots under Australia's new Working Holiday Maker visa programme, Australian Assistant Minister for Immigration Matt Thistlethwaite said on Monday. The visa, which allows Indians aged 18 to 30 to live, work, and study in Australia for up to 12 months, marks a key step in strengthening ties between the two nations, he said at the launch event of Australian Working Holiday Maker programme. The visa ballot process opened on 1 October and will close by the end of the month. Afterward, successful candidates will be randomly selected, and those chosen can begin their stay in Australia next year.*—PTI*

Pak's central bank says country set to repay $30B debt

ISLAMABAD, 14 OCT

Pakistan's central bank said the country is scheduled to repay a total of USD 30.35 billion in maturing foreign debt and interest payment in this financial year even as the foreign debt repayments and interest payments are rising every passing year, a media report said on Monday. The payments over the 12 months from August 2024 to July 2025 include those significant loans which bilateral creditors roll over every year, reported the Express Tribune quoting a JS Global report, which, in turn, cited data from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The report showed that Pakistan is to repay maturing foreign debt worth USD 26.48 billion and pay another USD 3.86 billion on account of interest expense in the period. Pakistan's repayments and interest payments are fully secured under the latest USD 7 billion IMF Extended Fund Facility through the loan period of 37 months.*—PTI*

China deploys 125 jets near Taiwan in warning drills

China says it is punishing Taiwan for junking its sovereignty

China also deployed ships surrounding Taiwan and its outlying islands simulating the sealing off of key ports in the Taiwan Strait, on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

TAIPEI, 14 OCT

China employed a record 125 aircraft, as well as its Liaoning aircraft carrier and ships, in large-scale military exercises surrounding Taiwan and its outlying islands Monday, simulating the sealing off of key ports in a move that underscores the tense situation in the Taiwan Strait, officials said.

China's Defence Ministry said the drills were a response to the Taiwanese president's refusal to accept Beijing's demand that self-governed Taiwan acknowledge itself as a part of the People's Republic of China under the rule of the Communist Party.

The drills came four days after Taiwan celebrated the founding of its government on its National Day, when Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te said in a speech that China has no right to represent Taiwan and declared his commitment to "resist annexation or encroachment."

"Our military will definitely deal with the threat from China appropriately," Joseph Wu, secretary-general of Taiwan's security council, said at a forum in Taipei, Taiwan's capital.

Taiwan's Presidential Office called on China to "cease military provocations that undermine regional peace and stability and stop threatening Taiwan's democracy and freedom."

A map aired on China's state broadcaster CCTV showed six large blocks encircling Taiwan indicating where the military drills were being held, along with circles drawn around Taiwan's outlying islands. China's Defence Ministry has not said how long the drills will last.

China deployed its Liaoning aircraft carrier for the drills, and CCTV showed a J-15 fighter jet taking off from the deck of the carrier, though the exact location of the ship is unclear.

China's People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theater Command spokesperson Senior Captain Li Xi said the navy, army air force and missile corps were all mobilized for the drills, which were an integrated operation. "This is a major warning to those who back Taiwan independence and a signifier of our determination to safeguard our national sovereignty," Li said in a statement on the service's public media channel.

Taiwan's Defence Ministry said it deployed warships to designated spots in the ocean to carry out surveillance and stand at ready. It also deployed mobile missile and radar groups on land to track the vessels at sea. It said as of Monday morning, they had tracked 25 Chinese warplanes and seven warships and four Chinese government ships, though it did not specify what types of ships they were.*—PTI*

18 KILLED IN LEBANON

Israeli strike on Gaza hospital burns 4 Palestinians alive

DEIR AL-BALAH, 14 OCT

An Israeli airstrike on a hospital courtyard in the Gaza Strip early Monday killed at least four people and sent flames sweeping through a packed tent camp for people displaced by the war, leaving more than two dozen with severe burns, according to Palestinian medics.

Footage on social media showed tents ablaze and people desperately attempting to douse the fires and rescue people caught in it.

The Israeli military repeatedly struck crowded shelters and tent camps, alleging that Hamas fighters were using them as staging grounds for attacks.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central city of Deir al-Balah was already struggling to treat a large number of wounded people from an earlier strike on a school-turned-shelter nearby that killed at least 20 people when the early morning airstrike hit and fire engulfed many of the tents.

Associated Press footage showed children among the wounded. A man sobbed as he carried a toddler with a bandaged head in his arms. Another small child with a bandaged leg was given a blood transfusion on the floor of the packed hospital.

A Hezbollah drone attack on an army base in central Israel killed four soldiers and severely wounded seven others Sunday, the military said, in the deadliest strike by the group since Israel launched its ground invasion of Lebanon nearly two weeks ago.

Lebanese Red Cross says an Israeli airstrike in northern Lebanon has killed at least 18 people. The Lebanon-based Hezbollah called the attack near Binyamina city retaliation for Israeli strikes on Beirut on Thursday that killed 22 people. It later said it targeted Israel's elite Golani brigade, launching dozens of missiles to occupy Israeli air defence systems during the assault by "squadrons" of drones.

Hezbollah's deadly strike in Israel came the same day that the United States announced it would send a new air-defence system to Israel to help bolster protection against missiles, along with troops needed to operate it. *—PTI*

Palestinians look at the damage after an Israeli strike hit a tent area in Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Gaza on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

Russia captures southern Ukraine village ahead of winter

KYIV, 14 OCT

Russia said on Monday it captured the village of Levadne in southern Ukraine as it probes for weaknesses along the war's roughly 1,000km front line, including in eastern areas which currently are the main focus of Moscow's military effort before winter arrives.

Ukrainian authorities, meanwhile, reported no nighttime Shahed drone attacks on the country for the first time in about six weeks, after saying five days ago it struck a Shahed storage facility in Russia's Krasnodar region where some 400 drones reportedly were being kept.

In Moscow, the Defence Ministry said Russian troops took Levadne in the Zaporizhzhia region. Levadne was seized by the Russians early during the war but was recaptured by Ukrainian forces during a counteroffensive in the summer of 2023.

Ukraine's troops are straining to hold back Russia's military might, especially in the

Volodymyr Zelenskyy *PHOTO: ANI*

eastern Donetsk region, and don't have the manpower or weaponry to launch their own offensive.

Russia illegally annexed four regions of Ukraine, including Zaporizhzhia, in September 2022. Russian President Vladimir Putin has demanded the withdrawal of Ukrainian forces from all four regions as the main condition for a prospective peace deal, a demand Ukraine and the West have rejected. Meanwhile, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy accused North Korea on Sunday of sending troops to Russia's army and once again appealed for more support to prevent "a bigger war". *—PTI*

Three people, including a cop, were injured when miscreants threw bricks from the rooftop of Nur Super Market *PHOTO: DYNAMITE NEWS*

3 hurt in clashes during Durga immersion in B'desh

DHAKA, 14 OCT

At least three people were injured in a clash that broke out between police and Hindu community going to immerse idols following the conclusion of Durga Pooja in an Old Dhaka locality, a media report said on Monday.

The three people, including a police officer, were injured when miscreants threw bricks from the rooftop of Nur Super Market in Patuatuli area of Old Dhaka on the procession heading to immerse idols in the Buriganga river late Sunday night, The Daily Star newspaper said quoting an eyewitness.

Following the attack, members of the Hindu community tried to enter the market but faced resistance from the police.

Kotwali police station Officer-in-Charge Md Enamul Hasan told the newspaper, "The locals attempted to enter the market. For the sake of the market's security, we resisted them from entering, which eventually led to the clash."

The Hindus constitute about 8 per cent of the 170 million population in Bangladesh. The community has faced attacks since regime change on 5 August and in the latest series of incidents, Durga pooja mandaps faced vandalism. *—PTI*

ARMED MAN ARRESTED NEAR TRUMP'S RALLY

LOS ANGELES, 14 OCT

A Nevada man with a shotgun, loaded handgun, ammunition and several fake passports in his vehicle was arrested at a security checkpoint outside Donald Trump's rally on Saturday in the Southern California desert, authorities said. He was released the same day on $5,000 bail.

The suspect, a 49-year-old resident of Las Vegas, was driving an unregistered black SUV with a "homemade" license plate that was stopped by deputies assigned to the rally in Coachella, east of Los Angeles, Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco said at a news conference Sunday afternoon.

The driver claimed to be a journalist but it was unclear if he had the proper credentials. Deputies noticed the interior of the vehicle was "in disarray" and a search uncovered the weapons and ammo, along with multiple passports and driver licenses with different names, Bianco said.

The man was arrested on suspicion of possessing a loaded firearm and possession of a high-capacity magazine, the department said in a statement. *—PTI*

N Korea is preparing to destroy inter-Korean roads, says Seoul

SEOUL, 14 OCT

South Korea said Monday it has detected signs that North Korea is preparing to destroy the northern parts of inter-Korean roads no longer in use, as the rivals are embroiled in soaring tensions over North Korea's claim that South Korea flew drones over its territory.

Destroying the roads would be in line with leader Kim Jong Un's push to cut off ties with South Korea and formally cement it as his country's principal enemy.

"They have installed screens on the road and are working behind those screens, preparing to blow up the roads," Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a briefing. He said the demolitions could be carried out as early as Monday.

Lee said that the South Korean military believes that the North could also attempt to launch a space rocket, which is viewed by the UN as a banned test of long-range missile technology. Lee said North Korea may conduct unspecified "small provocations" to ramp up pressure on Seoul.

Barricades are placed near the Unification Bridge, which leads to the Panmunjom in Demilitarized Zone in South Korea on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

It's not clear how much parts of the roads North Korea would destroy.

The development comes as North Korea recently accused South Korea of launching drones to drop propaganda leaflets over Pyongyang three times this month and threatened to respond with force if it happened again.

In a statement Sunday, the North's Defence Ministry said that the military had issued a preliminary operation order to artillery and other army units near the border with South Korea to "get fully ready to open fire."

The spokesperson said that the entire South Korean territory "might turn into piles of ashes" following the North's powerful attack.

South Korea has refused to confirm whether it sent drones but warned it would sternly punish North Korea if the safety of its citizens is threatened.

Last week, North Korea said it will permanently block its border with South Korea and build front-line defence structures to cope with "confrontational hysteria" by South Korean and US forces. *—PTI*

200 PTI WORKERS HELD

Security measures tightened as Pak set to host high-profile SCO

ISLAMABAD, 14 OCT

Elaborate security measures are in place as Pakistan on Monday was gearing up to host the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit starting Tuesday here in Islamabad.

Foreign delegations have started to reach Pakistan to attend the mega international event being held under the shadow of increased terror attacks across the country and the continued protests by jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party threatening to disrupt the law and order situation.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and prime ministers of China and Russia among others are attending the two-day 23rd SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting.

Pakistan authorities have banned all kinds of political gatherings and protests *PHOTO: DUNYA NEWS*

The CHG meeting will discuss ongoing cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, environment, socio-cultural linkages and review the performance of the Organisation.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in his capacity as the current Chair of the CHG, will preside over the upcoming CHG meeting.

According to the Foreign Office, the SCO member States will be represented by the Prime Ministers of China, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as well as the First Vice President of Iran apart from Jaishankar.

The authorities have banned all kinds of political gatherings and protests on this occasion, however, tension prevailed due to the threat of protest by Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which announced to hold a demonstration at the D-Chowk if party leaders and others were not allowed to meet Khan.

Pakistan's law enforcement agencies arrested more than 200 workers of Imran Khan's party in Punjab to thwart its planned protest in Islamabad during the SCO. *—PTI*

CHINESE PREMIER ARRIVES IN PAKISTAN

China's Premier Li Qiang with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the Nur Khan airbase in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, on Monday. The Chinese PM arrived for a four-day visit during which he will attend the SCO summit and hold bilateral meetings with Pakistan leaders on several issues, including the strategic China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. This is the first visit by any Chinese premier to Pakistan in 11 years and comes on the back of recent attacks on Chinese nationals working on infrastructure projects in Pakistan *PHOTO: PTI*

Gold revisits all-time high of ₹78,700 per 10gms

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Gold prices rose Rs 200 to revisit the all-time high of Rs 78,700 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday on persistent buying by stockists and traders even as the precious metal lost steam globally, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 78,500 per 10 grams on Friday. Silver jumped Rs 500 to Rs 93,500 per kg on the back of fresh industrial demand. It had ended at Rs 93,000 per kg in the previous close. Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed by Rs 600 to reclaim its all-time high level of Rs 78,300 per 10 grams. The metal had finished at Rs 78,100 per 10 grams. Earlier, gold prices hit a record Rs 78,700 per 10 grams on 7 October. Silver delivery plummeted Rs 929 or 1.01 per cent to Rs 90,761 per kg on MCX. Silver fell 1.17 per cent lower to USD 31.39 per ounce in Asian markets. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 4 paise to settle at 84.06 against US dollar

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The rupee recovered from its all-time low levels and appreciated 4 paise to close at 84.06 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday supported by strong domestic equity markets. Forex traders said the rupee was weighed down by the strong US dollar and elevated crude oil prices. Moreover, the Reserve Bank of India's intervention, backed by record-high reserves supported the local unit at lower levels, they said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.06 against the greenback and traded in a tight range of 84.05 and 84.07. The unit settled for the day at 84.06 (provisional), registering a rise of 4 paise over its previous close. Meanwhile, the dollar index, the greenback's strength, was trading 0.08 per cent higher at 102.97. *—PTI*

Domestic passenger vehicle wholesales dip 1%

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Passenger vehicle wholesales India witnessed declined 1 per cent year-on-year to 3,56,752 units in September. The total dispatches to dealers from companies stood at 3,61,717 units in September 2023, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) said in a statement. Total two-wheeler sales, however, rose 16 per cent year-on-year to 20,25,993 units last month, as compared to 17,49,794 units in the year-ago period, it added. Total three-wheeler wholesales witnessed a 7 per cent on-year increase to 79,683 units, as against 74,671 units in September 2023, SIAM said. *—PTI*

Domestic MF expands stake by 1% in Paytm

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Domestic Institutions led by mutual funds have raised their stake in the Indian mobile payments company Paytm. Latest shareholding pattern filed by the company on the exchanges shows that mutual funds have increased their stake in the company by 1 per cent. Domestic mutual funds company Mirae Asset and Nippon Mutual Funds have expanded their stake in the company to 4.49 per cent and 2.27 per cent respectively. Dolat Capital says NPCI data for June - August suggests a stable UPI share, resilient merchant base and growing partners for the company. Another brokerage Ventura recently initiated coverage on Paytm with a target price of Rs 1,170 over 24 months. Analysts at the firm said that despite RBI stricture on associate Paytm Payment Bank (PPBL), they believe that Paytm's business model is robust. In Q1 FY25, Paytm reported operating revenue of Rs 1,502 crore, and a balance sheet with Rs 8,108 Cr of cash on books. Paytm says it will remain focussed on its core payments and financial business. *—ANI*

Retail inflation rises to 5.49% on costlier food items

WPI inflation rises to 1.84%; Fuel & power saw deflation of 4.05%

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Retail inflation rose to 5.49 per cent in September from 3.65 per cent in the preceding month mainly due to higher food prices, according to official data released on Monday.

The consumer price index-based inflation was 5.02 per cent in September 2023.

The National Statistics Office data showed that inflation in the food basket rose to 9.24 per cent in September from 5.66 per cent in August and 6.62 per cent in the year-ago month.

The Reserve Bank, which kept the key short-term lending rate unchanged earlier this month, has been tasked by the government to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

Meanwhile, the wholesale price inflation rose to 1.84 per cent in September as food items, especially vegetables, turned costlier.

The wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation was 1.31 per cent in August. It was (-)0.07 per cent in September last year.

Inflation in food items shot up to 11.53 per cent last month against 3.11 per cent in August. This was led by 48.73 per cent inflation in vegetables as against (-)10.01 per cent in August.

Inflation in potato and onion continued to be high at 78.13 per cent and 78.82 per cent, respectively in September.

Fuel and power category witnessed deflation of 4.05 per cent in September against a deflation of 0.67 per cent in August. *—PTI*

The consumer price index-based inflation was 5.02 per cent in September 2023, according to official data **PHOTO: PTI**

IT & BANKS GAIN

Sensex rises 592 pts, Nifty closes above 25K mark

MUMBAI, 14 OCT

Benchmark BSE Sensex rose by nearly 592 points on Monday following gains in IT and banking shares amid a firm trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 591.69 points or 0.73 per cent to close at 81,973.05. During the day, it surged 690.81 points or 0.84 per cent to hit a high of 82,072.17.

The NSE Nifty rose 163.70 points or 0.66 per cent to settle at 25,127.95. In the intraday trade, the benchmark indices climbed 195.5 points or 0.78 per cent to 25,159.75.

From the Sensex pack, Tech Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Larsen & Toubro, ITC, Infosys, IndusInd Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Titan and HCL Technologies were among the gainers.

Maruti Suzuki India, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance, UltraTech Cement, Nestle India, Axis Bank and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) were among the laggards.

European markets were trading on a mixed note in mid-session deals.

In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai and Seoul closed higher while Hong Kong settled in the negative territory. Wall Street ended with gains on Friday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,162.66 crore on Friday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 3,730.87 crore, according to exchange data. *—PTI*

IN 5 YEARS

'India gave better returns than China'

MUMBAI, 14 OCT

PHOTO: PTI

SEBI Whole-time Member Ananth Narayan G on Monday reminded investors that Indian equities have consistently delivered 15 per cent returns over the last 5 years whereas the same has been zero or even negative in China.

Terming the Indian markets "sone pe suhaga" for delivering higher returns for lower risks, Narayan also flagged a few areas of caution for investors and asked them to be conscious of the risks.

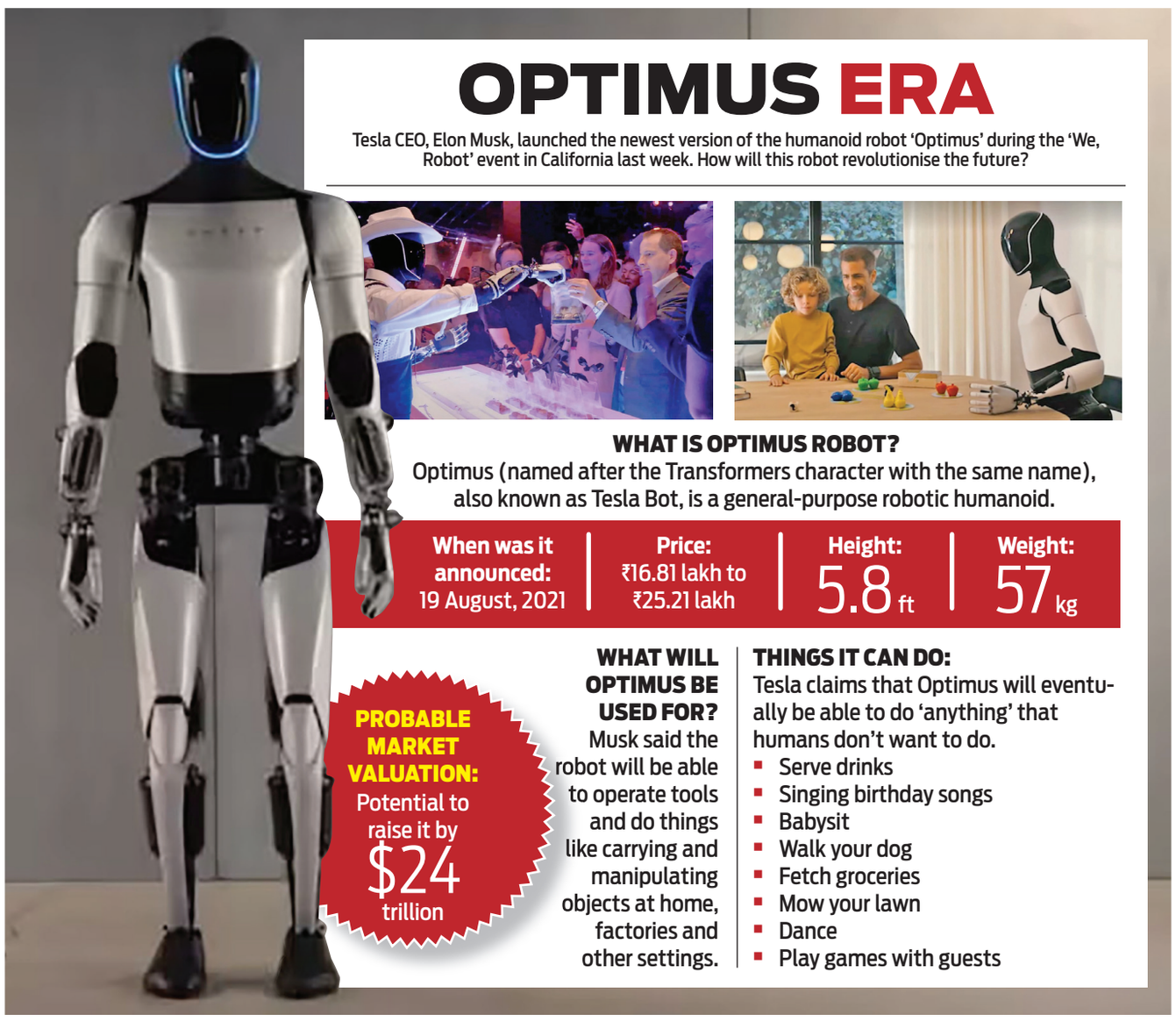
Speaking at an event marking the start of the Investor Awareness Week at NSE, Narayan said FY24 was a "remarkable" year for India, with the benchmark indices returning 28 per cent and the volatility just 10 per cent.

Making it clear that it will not be the same going forward and investors should not assume it to be a one-way street, Narayan said such handsome returns can lead to complacency and pointed to a lot of youngsters opening up demat accounts to join the bandwagon.

He said that 40 per cent of the small and midcap scrips have shot up by 5 times in the last five years, because of an imbalance between inflow of investor money and supply of new paper.

From a broader, longer-term perspective, Indian markets will only go north from here given the economic growth prospects in the country, Narayan said, issuing specific advice to investors.

Investors need to have the right intermediaries to capitalise on this opportunity presented by India, and not fall for the unregistered and fly-by-night 'finfluencers' who might be driven by vested interests, he said. *—PTI*


OPTIMUS ERA
Tesla CEO, Elon Musk, launched the newest version of the humanoid robot 'Optimus' during the 'We, Robot' event in California last week. How will this robot revolutionise the future?
WHAT IS OPTIMUS ROBOT?
Optimus (named after the Transformers character with the same name), also known as Tesla Bot, is a general-purpose robotic humanoid.
When was it announced: 19 August, 2021
Price: ₹16.81 lakh to ₹25.21 lakh
Height: 5.8 ft
Weight: 57 kg
PROBABLE MARKET VALUATION: Potential to raise it by $24 trillion
WHAT WILL OPTIMUS BE USED FOR?
Musk said the robot will be able to operate tools and do things like carrying and manipulating objects at home, factories and other settings.
THINGS IT CAN DO:
Tesla claims that Optimus will eventually be able to do 'anything' that humans don't want to do.
Serve drinks
Singing birthday songs
Babysit
Walk your dog
Fetch groceries
Mow your lawn
Dance
Play games with guests

5G to inject $450B into economy by 2040: Scindia

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Union Minister of Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia on Monday stated that 5G technology is expected to inject around USD 450 billion into the Indian economy by 2040.

The minister highlighted this during his address at the Global Standards Symposium at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, one of the world's largest telecom events.

He said, "In India alone, for example, 5G is anticipated to inject an astounding 450 billion dollars into the economy by 2040."

The minister emphasized that 5G is not just about faster internet or low latency, but is laying the groundwork for smart cities, advanced infrastructure, and autonomous innovations.

Scindia further noted that 5G has already been rolled out across all 36 states and Union Territories, covering 98 per cent of districts and 80 per cent of the population in just 22 months.

He said this achievement showcases not only India's technological prowess but also the transformative power of standardised innovation. *—ANI*

RBI pitches for reducing cost & time of remittances

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday made a case for reducing time and cost of overseas remittances, which are important for developing economies including India.

According to the World Migration Report 2024 released by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), India's remittances surged to USD 111 billion last year, surpassing all other nations.

As per the Bank of England projection, the value of global cross-border payments is estimated to surpass USD 250 trillion by 2027.

The significant volume of crossborder worker remittances, the growing size of gross flows of capital, and the increasing importance of cross-border ecommerce have acted as catalysts to this growth, he noted.

India and a few other economies have already commenced efforts to expand linkage of crossborder fast payment systems both in the bilateral and multilateral modes, he said.

The RBI Governor also raised concerns over misuse of Artificial Intelligence in the banking space saying it could lead to more cyber attacks and data breaches.

Private credit markets have expanded rapidly with limited regulation, he said, adding, they pose significant risks to financial stability, particularly since they have not been stress-tested in a downturn.

Higher interest rates, aimed at curtailing inflationary pressures, have led to increase in debt servicing costs. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

RS 1,865 -RS 1,960 PER SHARE

Hyundai Motor to open India's biggest IPO today

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Hyundai Motor India is preparing to launch its Initial Public Offering (IPO) soon, marking a significant milestone for the company. As one of the largest car manufacturers in India, Hyundai's upcoming IPO has generated considerable excitement among investors.

This offering provides an opportunity for both retail and institutional investors to acquire a stake in a leading player in the Indian automotive market.

The Hyundai Motor India IPO is scheduled for bidding from 15 October, to 17 October. The price range is set between Rs 1,865 and Rs 1,960 per share, with a minimum investment of Rs 13,055 for a lot of 7 shares. The issue size is estimated at Rs 27,870.16 crore, making it one of the largest IPOs of the year.

Investors planning to apply for this IPO can benefit from open free demat account online services, which are offered by multiple platforms. These services streamline the investment process, making it easier to participate in IPOs without the hassle of paperwork.

Strengths of Hyundai Motor India:

1.Strong Production and Export Capabilities
Hyundai Motor India has exported over 3.53 million passenger vehicles to more than 150 countries, including major markets such as Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East.

2.Diverse Vehicle Portfolio
Hyundai's current vehicle portfolio is diverse, catering to a wide range of customer preferences. The company offers 13 different passenger vehicle models across major segments, including sedans, hatchbacks, and SUVs.

3.Robust R&D and Local Customisation
Hyundai's Research and Development (R&D) centre in Hyderabad plays a crucial role in the company's innovation efforts. Financial Performance of Hyundai Motor India

Hyundai Motor India has shown consistent financial growth over the past few years, making its IPO an attractive proposition. The company's revenue from operations increased significantly from Rs 40,972.25 crore in 2021 to Rs 60,307.58 crore in 2023, a growth of almost 47 per cent.

This robust financial standing, coupled with strong market leadership, makes Hyundai a strong contender in the Indian automotive sector, attracting both long-term and short-term investors.

While the Hyundai Motor India IPO presents an exciting opportunity, there are some risks that potential investors should keep in mind:

1. Market Dependency: The company's revenue is heavily reliant on the Indian automobile market. Any fluctuations in market demand, regulations, or fuel prices can impact the company's profitability.

2.Global Competition: Hyundai faces stiff competition not only from domestic manufacturers but also from international brands. The competitive landscape could affect market share and profitability.

3. Supply Chain Disruptions: The automotive industry has faced several supply chain challenges, especially with semiconductor shortages. These disruptions can delay production and delivery, impacting revenue growth.

Despite these risks, the strong fundamentals of Hyundai Motor India position it as a resilient player in the automotive industry.

For those interested in participating in the IPO, using an F&O trading app could help optimise trading strategies, particularly for those engaging in futures and options trading.

To invest in the Hyundai Motor India IPO, potential investors must submit an application.

The application process is simple and straightforward. Eligible individuals can apply under various categories, including Regular, Employee, and High Networth Individual (HNI).

The maximum investment limit for Regular and Employee applicants is Rs 2 lakh. *—PTI*

Hyundai's price range is set between Rs 1,865 and Rs 1,960 per share, with a minimum investment of Rs 13,055 for a lot of 7 shares **PHOTO: ANI**

PHOTO: X

Top British shooters miss World Cup in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

The ISSF World Cup final here has been robbed of some sheen as three of Britain's top shotgun shooters, including Paris Olympics trap gold-medallist Nathan Hales, will not be competing in the prestigious year-ending event owing to "confusion" over paperwork that led to denial of visa to them. The World Cup final got underway at the Karni Singh Ranges with elite shooters from across the world, including Olympic and world championship medallists, taking part in the training sessions on Monday. The competitions will start on Tuesday. "No, he's (Hales) not (coming). They couldn't get their business visas in time. I don't know the exact ins and outs of it, but there was a complication...I think, what happened is that one of them applied for a tourist visa," Peter Wilson, personal coach of Hales in the Paris Games, said. —*PTI*

Eng captain Stokes returns for 2nd Test against Pakistan

MULTAN, 14 OCT

Captain Ben Stokes made a return to the England Test team as he was on Monday named in the playing eleven for the second match against Pakistan beginning here Tuesday, after he was declared to have been recovered from an injury he sustained in August. Stokes, who has been out of action due to a hamstring problem, is one of the two changes in the England side that beat Pakistan in the first Test by an innings and 47 runs. Fast bowler Matthew Potts was included in place of Gus Atkinson. Stokes has replaced pacer Chris Woakes while England have retained both spinners Shoaib Bashir and Jack Leach in their eleven. —*PTI*

Chennaiyin FC stun Dortmund at Norwich Mina Cup

CHENNAI, 14 OCT

Chennaiyin FC's under-12 team delivered a remarkable performance, defeating German side Borussia Dortmund 4-2 at the Norwich City Mina Cup UK, courtesy a sensational four-goal display by Manipur-born attacker Nepolian Laikhuram. Chennaiyin FC's youth squad is the only Indian club competing in the prestigious tournament, held over the weekend at Norwich City FC's training facility in England. Laikhuram was the standout performer for Chennaiyin FC as he finished as their top scorer in the tournament with six goals, including a brace against Bermuda FA. Chennaiyin advanced to the Silver Cup after closely contested matches, including narrow defeats to Inter Milan (0-1) and Liverpool (0-2). They secured a 2-0 victory against Bermuda FA in the Silver Cup group stage before their stunning win over Borussia Dortmund and another 2-0 triumph against Bermuda in the placement matches. —*PTI*

Yamal leaves Spain squad with muscle strain

BARCELONA, 14 OCT

Teenage standout Lamine Yamal has left Spain's squad after he strained a muscle in his left leg. Yamal will miss Spain's Nations League home game against Serbia on Tuesday. A day after the 17-year-old forward helped Spain beat Denmark 1-0, the Spanish soccer federation said Sunday that tests indicated the Barcelona star had strained a leg muscle and was being sent back to his club to avoid "the risk of injury." Yamal was a key player in Spain's triumph at this year's European Championship. Spain coach Luis de la Fuente called up Atletico Madrid player Rodrigo Riquelme in Yamal's place. Barcelona's next game is at home against Sevilla on 20 October in the Spanish league. —*PTI*

Over 350 players in fray for 1st ever women's HIL auctions

Auction will witness 250 domestic and at least 70 overseas players

NEW DELHI, 14 OCT

Over 350 players from around the world will go under the hammer in the inaugural women's Hockey India League auctions here on Tuesday.

After a seven-year hiatus, the highly-anticipated HIL is making a grand return with an expanded format, featuring both men's and an exclusive women's league for the first time. The historic auction will witness over 250 domestic players and more than 70 overseas players vying for a spot in the inaugural season of the women's HIL.

India's top women players, including seasoned goalkeeper Savita, national team captain Salima Tete, rising drag-flicker Deepika, the most-capped women's player Vandana Katariya, and forward Lalremsiami are some of the big names from the country.

Additionally, former Indian stalwarts such as Yogita Bali, Lilima Minz, and Namita Toppo have registered, adding further excitement to the auction.

On the international front, renowned players such as Delfina Merino (Argentina), Charlotte Stapenhorst (Germany), Maria Granatto (Argentina), Rachael Lynch (Australia), and Nike Lorenz (Germany) are set to participate, ensuring a global spectacle. Notably, the maiden season of the women's edition of the HIL will witness participation of total four teams, while two more teams will be added in the second season of the tournament.

The participating teams for this season include Soorma Hockey Club, Shrachi Rahr Bengal Tigers, Delhi SG Pipers, and Odisha Warriors. For the second season, Hyderabad Toofans and a team owned by the BC Jindal Group will be added, expanding the lineup to six teams.

Franchises will have a purse of Rs 2 crore to select players, with athletes categorised under three base price slabs -- Rs 10 lakh, Rs 5 lakhs, and Rs 2 lakh. The historic women's auction marks a major milestone in the world of hockey, showcasing the sport's growth and the increasing prominence of women's hockey.

It also stands out as one of the rare instances in India where both men's and women's editions of a major sports league will run concurrently. "This is not just a revival of the Hockey India League but also a celebration of the growth of women's hockey in India. We are proud to host the first-ever women's auction, which is not just about building teams but also about building legacies," Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey said. —*PTI*

Seasoned goalkeeper Savita, national team captain Salima Tete, rising drag-flicker Deepika, the most-capped women's player Vandana Katariya are some of the big names in the competition PHOTO: PTI

PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen PHOTOS: ANI

Sindhu, Lakshya aim to regain form at Denmark Open

- At Arena Fyn in Odense, they will hope for better results as they lead India's challenge in this prestigious tournament, the 13th event of the 2024 BWF World Tour.Sen, who finished fourth at the Paris Olympics, went down fighting to Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien Chen last week

ODENSE, 14 OCT

Indian badminton stars PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen will be eager to bounce back from a disappointing resumption to their season when they compete in the USD 8,50,000 Denmark Open Super 750, starting Tuesday.

Both players found the going tough in the Arctic Open in Vantaa, Finland, last week where former world champion Sindhu suffered a first-round exit, while 2021 world bronze winner Sen bowed out in the second round.

At Arena Fyn in Odense, they will hope for better results as they lead India's challenge in this prestigious tournament, the 13th event of the 2024 BWF World Tour.

Sen, who finished fourth at the Paris Olympics, went down fighting to Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien Chen last week.

Here, the 23-year-old from Almora will face China's Lu Guang Zu in his opening match -- an opponent he is yet to meet in professional badminton.

Should he advance, Sen might face Indonesia's Jonatan Christie in the second round, with reigning world champion Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand will, in all likelihood, be waiting for him in the quarter-finals.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, will need to quickly address the issues affecting her performance after a disappointing first-round loss to Canada's Michelle Li, an opponent she had previously defeated 10 times. Under the guidance of new coaches Anup Sridhar and Korea's Lee Hyun-il, she will open against Chinese Taipei's Pai Yu Po and could potentially face China's Han Yue in the second round if she progresses.

In addition to Sindhu, India will have several other competitors in women's singles, including the in-form Malvika Bansod, Aakarshi Kashyap, and promising talent Unnati Hooda.

Bansod, who had reached the quarterfinals of China Open, will go up against Vietnam's Nguyen Thuy Linh at first, while Kashyap faces Thailand's Supanida Katethong. Hooda, the 2022 Odisha Open winner, will compete against Lauren Lam from the USA. —*PTI*

Steve Smith set to return to No. 4 spot for India Test series

MELBOURNE, 14 OCT

Veteran Australia batter Steve Smith is set to return to his favoured number four position after a short stint as an opener in the upcoming Test series against India, national selector George Bailey confirmed on Monday.

Post opener David Warner's retirement earlier this year, Smith had volunteered to open the innings.

Although he made an unbeaten 91 in only his second Test in the new role, the 35-year-old didn't fare well in the series against New Zealand, collecting a total of 51 runs in four innings.

Bailey confirmed that Smith expressed his desire to return to the middle order to captain Pat Cummins and head coach Andrew McDonald, who have decided to accommodate the batter's request.

While Bailey didn't say where Smith will bat in the middle order, the former captain is likely to slot in at number four.

This development means Australia need to find a new opener. The selectors will follow the Australia 'A' series against India 'A' keenly, where contenders like Cameron Bancroft, teenage sensation Sam Konstas, and Marcus Harris will vie for the opportunity to open alongside Usman Khawaja in the five-match Test series against India.

Green ruled out of India Test series, to undergo back surgery

Australia all-rounder Cameron Green was on Monday ruled out of the marquee Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test series against India owing to a stress fracture in his spine that will need six months to heal after a surgery.

The 25-year-old seam-bowling all-rounder was diagnosed with the problem in his lower back after experiencing pain during last month's tour of the UK. Green has previously suffered four stress fractures in his back but has not encountered any issues in that area since 2019. —*PTI*

Steve Smith expressed his desire to return to the middle order to captain Pat Cummins PHOTO: ANI

- Bailey said that Smith expressed his desire to return to the middle order to captain Pat Cummins accepted

KOHLI HUNGRY FOR RUNS: GAMBHIR

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

India head coach Gautam Gambhir is not too concerned about the recent lukewarm form of Virat Kohli, insisting that the star batter remains as hungry as he was when he made his debut and should not be judged after every match.

Kohli has made only one fifty, a 76 against South Africa at Centurion in December 2023, in his last eight innings, and him regaining his touch is crucial for India against New Zealand in a three-Test rubber starting on Wednesday and during the five-match series against Australia next month.

Gambhir is confident that Kohli will come good very soon.

"See, my thoughts about Virat have always been very clear that he is a world-class cricketer. He has performed for such a long period of time. He is as hungry as when he made his debut. To now, his hunger is always there," Gambhir told reporters here on Monday.

"That hunger is what makes him a world-class cricketer. I am sure that he will be hungry to get runs in this series and probably moving forward to Australia as well," he added.

Gambhir said the prolific batter, once he gets into "those runs scoring phases", is remarkably consistent. —*PTI*

AUSTRALIA CALLS UP BATTING SENSATION KONSTAS FOR INDIA A SERIES

MELBOURNE, 14 OCT

Teenage batting sensation Sam Konstas has been named in Australia's 17-member 'A' squad, led by Nathan McSweeney, for the upcoming first-class matches against India A.

India A will play two first-class matches in Mackay (Oct 31-Nov 4) and Melbourne (Nov 7-10) against hosts Australia A, as a build-up to the five-Test Border-Gavaskar Trophy series.

Kontas, 19, received a call-up following his twin centuries in the first match of the Sheffield Shield, becoming the youngest player to achieve the feat since the legendary Ricky Ponting. With all-rounder Cameron Green sidelined for six months due to a stress fracture in his lower back requiring surgery, and Steve Smith likely moving back to No. 4 after opening last season, Konstas will be eyeing the vacant opening slot.

The squad also has Cameron Bancroft and Marcus Harris and Tasmanian all-rounder Beau Webster, who had also scored a hundred against Victoria in the Shield season. "We are really excited by this squad, particularly after some of the tremendous performances to start the Sheffield Shield season," Australian Chair of Selectors George Bailey said.

- The squad also has Cameron Bancroft and Marcus Harris and Beau Webster

"As always with Australia A selection we have picked a side we hope can present performances which are compelling for the upcoming Test summer, whilst also rewarding players for strong domestic form in roles we see as being important further afield. "It will be a great opportunity for these players to shine against a strong Test nation looking to prepare for what is going to be a captivating summer of Test cricket." —*PTI*

Sam Konstas PHOTO: X

RANJI TROPHY

Baroda stun defending champions Mumbai

- In a match that saw fortunes fluctuating in each of the four days, the 34-year-old Bhatt (6/55) ripped through the Mumbai line up in the second innings to help his side notch a memorable win. Chasing 262 for a win, Mumbai were shot out for 177 in 48.2 overs

VADODARA, 14 OCT

Left-arm spinner Bhargav Bhatt grabbed six wickets in a stunning bowling show as Baroda defeated defending champions Mumbai by 84 runs on the final day of their Group A Ranji Trophy match here on Monday.

In a match that saw fortunes fluctuating in each of the four days, the 34-year-old Bhatt (6/55 from 19.4 overs) ripped through the Mumbai line up in the second innings to help his side notch a memorable win.

Chasing 262 for a win, Mumbai were shot out for 177 in 48.2 overs. The 42-time champions Mumbai had resumed the day at 42 for 2, needing 220 runs to win the match on the final day.

Except for a 41-run stand between top-scorer Siddhesh Lad (59) and Shreyas Iyer (30), there was no real fight from the Mumbai batters, who lost eight wickets for 135 runs in 38.5 overs bowled on the day.

Overnight batter and captain Ajinkya Rahane was the first Mumbai batter to get out on Monday for 12. Soon after, the other overnight batter Ayush Mhatre (22) followed suit, both becoming victims of Bhatt.

Iyer and Lad -- the last man out for Mumbai -- were also accounted for by Bhatt. Baroda had taken an upper hand on the second day on Saturday by taking a 76-run first innings lead, courtesy a relentless effort from their bowlers. —*PTI*

Ajay Jadeja surpasses Virat Kohli in net worth

BENGALURU, 14 OCT

Yesteryear cricket Ajay Jadeja has overtaken Virat Kohli to become the wealthiest sportsperson in India at the age of 53. According to reports, his net worth has increased to Rs 1,450 crore from Rs 250 crore, after he was declared the heir to the Jamnagar royal throne on 12 October.

Maharaja Shatrusalyasinh Jadeja, Ajay's uncle made the official announcement naming his nephew the new heir to the throne. Known for his fearless and aggressive batting, Jadeja had played 15 Test matches and a whopping 196 One-Day Internationals (ODIs) from 1992 to 2000. Jadeja was particularly clutch in ODIs, known for rescuing India from tough spots with his sharp finishing skills. He racked up nearly 6,000 international runs, with 6 centuries and 30 half-centuries in ODIs.

According to media reports, the royal family of Jamnagar, to which Ajay Jadeja belongs, has a rich legacy in the field of cricket. The prestigious Ranji Trophy and Duleep Trophy are named after Jadeja's relatives, KS Ranjitsinhji and KS Duleepsinhji, respectively.

—*Salar News with agencies*

Ajay Jadeja PHOTO: X

DIARRA RULING

FIFA TO UPDATE TRANSFER RULES

ZURICH, 14 OCT

After a landmark court decision for the soccer transfer market, FIFA said on Monday it will now invite "key stakeholders" worldwide for talks about updating rules put in question by former France international Lassana Diarra.

The European Court of Justice ruled in the Diarra case on 4 October in Luxembourg that some parts of FIFA's transfer regulations did not comply with its laws on competition and freedom of movement for labor.

While some analysts speculate that the entire global transfer market, worth more than USD 10 billion each year, could be upended, FIFA believes its consultations can focus more narrowly on player-club disputes where contracts are allegedly broken without just cause.

The FIFA talks should include the global players' union FIFPRO, plus representatives from clubs, leagues and national soccer federations. "Together with them, FIFA will determine what conclusions must be drawn from the Diarra decision, and which changes are most appropriate and suitable to make to article 17 of the (transfer regulations)," the governing body's chief legal officer Emilio García said in a statement.

Diarra, a former Real Madrid, Arsenal and Chelsea player, signed a four-year contract with Lokomotiv Moscow in 2013.

FIFA and then the Court of Arbitration for Sport found the Russian club terminated the contract "with just cause" and ordered the player to pay 10.5 million euros (USD 11.2 million). Diarra argued his search for a new club was affected by FIFA rules, making his next employer jointly responsible for paying compensation to Lokomotiv.

"The Diarra decision confirms the sanctity of contracts. Nobody, neither a club nor a player, can simply walk away from a valid contract," García said. "Consequently, if players wish to be released from a contract, there will be financial consequences." —*PTI*

The European Court of Justice said that some parts of FIFA's transfer regulations did not comply with its laws on competitionn PHOTO: FIFA